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# News media framing of women's issues : images of voluntarily childless women

Kimberly Anne Cowart

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To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Kimberly Anne Cowart entitled "News media framing of women's issues : images of voluntarily childless women." I have examined the final electronic copy of this thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science, with a major in Communication.

Dorothy Bowles, Major Professor

We have read this thesis and recommend its acceptance:

Accepted for the Council:

Dixie L. Thompson

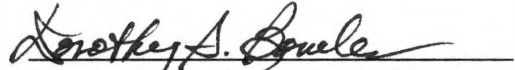
Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School

(Original signatures are on file with official student records.)

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Dorothy A. Bowlès, Major Professor

We have read this thesis and  
recommend its acceptance:

  
M. Mark Miller

  
Bonnie P. Riechert

Accepted for the Council:

  
Vice Provost and Dean of  
Graduate Studies

Thesis  
2003  
.C69

**News Media Framing of Women's Issues:  
Images of Voluntarily Childless Women**

**A Thesis Presented for the  
Master of Science Degree  
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville**

**Kimberly A. Cowart**

**May, 2003**

## **DEDICATION**

This thesis is dedicated to my husband, Glen Cowart  
in appreciation of his constant love, understanding, patience and support.

I would also like to dedicate this thesis to the memory  
of my maternal grandmother, Sammie Mae Pinckley Miller,  
and my fraternal grandmother, Reavis Reeder Ramer Mayo.  
Both of these remarkable women dedicated their lives to teaching careers,  
and both instilled in me a respect for life-long learning,  
an appreciation of the value of education,  
and the belief that my only limitations  
were those I placed upon myself.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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First of all, I would like to acknowledge the members of my thesis committee for their invaluable assistance. Fortunately, I was able to assemble my "dream team," from the University of Tennessee College of Communications faculty, including the committee chairman, Dr. Dorothy A. Bowles, Dr. M. Mark Miller and Dr. Bonnie Riechert.

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Both Dr. Miller's broad-based expertise in quantitative methodologies and his assistance with and explanation of the VBPro and VBMap software programs were invaluable for completion of the research contained in this thesis. Dr. Miller's accessibility, his insightful explanations and his refusal to accept anything less than my best work were all important factors in the completion of this project.

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study examines the theory of media framing and its effects on American culture. Frames generated by the news media can have significant influence on how social issues are perceived by the public, and can also have extensive impact on government policy and cultural norms. The images of voluntarily childless women in the U.S., as presented by the news media, served as the policy issue.

A Frame Mapping computer program was used to analyze the text of selected Associated press (AP) news stories to identify specific media frames about voluntarily childless women. The Frame Mapping process designated key terms and clusters of terms associated with designated stakeholders in the issue. A total of 91 stories produced multidimensional data, which was then mapped to illustrate the frequency and co-occurrence of the term clusters.

The results demonstrated evidence of specific, differentiated frames by the issue stakeholders. The media frames included positions on the policy issue as articulated by religious fundamentalists, those in favor of the childfree lifestyle and those opposed; other frames related to the themes of working women, in addition to individual and group responses to changes in social structure during the last three decades.

The study revealed a strong correlation between the increasing political and social power of religious fundamentalists from the late 1970s through 2000 and a rise in pronatalist values; both of which, subsequently, influenced a marked increase in negative framing of voluntarily childless women.

An additional purpose of this study is to contribute to the increased awareness of the phenomenon of voluntarily childless women and its impact on American society.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. INTRODUCTION .....	1
II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE .....	3
Framing Theory .....	3
News Media Framing of the Women's Movement .....	12
Images of Voluntarily Childless Women .....	17
Statement of the Research Aims .....	33
III. METHOD.....	34
IV. RESULTS .....	40
Cluster Analysis, Religious Fundamentalists .....	45
Cluster Analysis, Childfree Lifestyles .....	53
Cluster Analysis, Working Women .....	56
Cluster Analysis, Adaptation to Change .....	60
Cluster Analysis, Childfree Negatives .....	62
Cluster Analysis, Unidentified Themes .....	67
Time Code Analysis.....	71
V. DISCUSSION .....	75
Conclusions .....	76
Recommendation for Further Research .....	78
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	80
APPENDICES .....	92
AP News Wire Articles .....	93
VITA .....	109

## LIST OF TABLES

TABLE	PAGE
1. Defined Stakeholders .....	37
2. Key Terms and Frequencies of Occurrence .....	41-44
3. Term Cluster 1, Religious Fundamentalists .....	50
4. Religious Fundamentalists Articles .....	51
5. Term Cluster 2, Childfree Lifestyles .....	53
6. Childfree Lifestyles Articles .....	54
7. Term Cluster 3, Working Women .....	57
8. Working Women Articles .....	58
9. Term Cluster 4, Adaptation to Change .....	61
10. Adaptation to Change Articles .....	62
11. Cluster 5, Childfree Negatives .....	64
12. Childfree Negatives Articles .....	65
13. Term Cluster 6, Unidentified Theme .....	68
14. Term Cluster 7, Unidentified Theme .....	68
15. Term Frequencies .....	74
16. Independent Samples Test .....	74

## LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE	PAGE
1. Dedrogram Map, Page 1 .....	46
2. Dendrogram Map, Page 2 .....	47
3. Dendrogram Map, Page 3 .....	48
4. Dendrogram Map, Full View .....	49
5. Cluster Map .....	73

# **CHAPTER I.**

## **INTRODUCTION**

During the late 1960s and throughout the 1970s, the social reforms influenced by the feminist movement, the advent of the birth control pill and the establishment of abortion rights seemed to promise a bright future for women living in America. Females were going to have previously undreamed-of opportunities to select non-traditional educational and career paths, to achieve financial and career parity with men and to make life choices based on what they actually wanted, not on the dictates of biology or society. They could deviate from the traditional roles of wife, mother and homemaker without risking condemnation.

However, the political and social climate changed during the 1980s. The election of Ronald Reagan as president, along with the successful marriage of the Religious Right and the Republican Party, established a highly visible base for conservatives, many of who firmly believed in traditional roles for women. The backlash against feminism, fueled by groups such as Phyllis Schlafly's Eagle Forum, sought to solidify public support for women who married, had children and stayed at home.

As the economy shifted towards an increasing dependence on consumerism, the news and commercial media became aware of the new power of "the family." The influential baby-boomers, many of which came late to parenthood, began demanding more and more attention, services and political clout for families. Female celebrities began to realize that motherhood was an almost instant method of enhancing their popularity. And advertisers started cashing in, using parental guilt as a "hook" to sell everything from automobiles to butter. In this climate of "celebration" for the family, women who have remained voluntarily childless, although their

numbers have swelled to about 2 million, seem to be an almost invisible segment of American society.

Voluntary childlessness is a relatively new phenomenon, having come into existence primarily in the mid-1970s. Although still somewhat of a rarity in American society, the numbers of voluntarily childless individuals (or "childfree," a term which distinguishes those who have made a deliberate choice not to have children from individuals who are, for biological or other reasons, physically unable to have children) has grown considerably over the last two decades.

Even in today's relatively liberal society, however, the choice of an individual, particularly a female, to be childfree by choice often is challenged, threatened or ignored. Childless women seldom appear in advertising, news or entertainment media; for example, just about all female television characters of appropriate age, from Murphy Brown to Dana Scully on the *X-Files*, eventually end up pregnant.

If the U.S. is a strongly pronatalist culture, how are those attitudes reflected in the media, and what is the media's influence on what appears to be a pro-parenthood culture?

This thesis divides the review of the literature into three parts: the first, an outline of the theoretical literature on framing; the second, a literature review on the media's framing of the feminist movement; and the third, a review of the literature regarding the cultural perspective on voluntarily childless women in the United States. The increase in recent decades of the numbers of women who deliberately choose not have children—for a variety of reasons—appears to be primarily a direct component of the women's rights movement and the new reproductive and workplace freedoms that it encouraged.

## CHAPTER II.

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

#### Framing Theory

Studies on how journalists make decisions on news content began in the 1950s. Early research suggested that journalists acted as "gatekeepers" of media messages—that they select from among the day's events those that will become "news"—and other efforts have focused on the ways in which media workers and their employers, as well as organizational structures and society itself, affect media content (Shoemaker and Reese, 1991).

Entman stated that "To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation and/or treatment recommendation for the item described" (Entman, 1993, p. 52).

Gamson and Modigliani focused on interaction among audience members, media content and media. They pointed to frames in media context within single stories, among issues and among "issue packages" or sets of issues (Gamson and Modigliani, 1989).

Tankard, Henderickson, Silberman, Bliss and Ghanem defined framing as "a central organizing idea for news content that supplies a context and suggest what the issue is through the use of selection, emphasis, exclusion and elaboration" (Tankard, Henderickson, Silberman, Bliss and Ghanem, 1991, p. 277). In the text *Communication Theories*, Severin and Tankard go on to comment that "...The concept of media framing presents a new paradigm to replace the older paradigm of studying the 'objectivity and bias' of the media....the framing of news stories may

also have more subtle—and powerful—influences on audiences than bias in news stories” (Severin and Tankard, 2001, p. 277).

Framing scholarship emphasizes the constructed nature of media messages, and often examines media portrayals of issues as clues to journalists' framing decisions, state Reese, Grandy and Grant. These framing decisions, in turn, provide important evidence about the flow of power in society (Reese, Grandy and Grant, 2001). Reese et. al. also suggest that "In traditionally empirical terms, concepts of framing offer a dichotomous way to sort experience into—and out of—social relevance and power" (Reese, et. al., 2001, p. 124).

In their article “Frame Resonance: Spiral of Opportunity Theory,” Miller and Riechert state “By now it is well established that framing provides a fruitful way of conceptualizing how media shape news and people’s perception of it...we think of framing as an ongoing process by which ideological interpretive mechanisms are derived from competing stakeholder positions (frames, for us, are contexts in which issues are interpreted)” (Miller and Riechert, 1999, p. 3).

Parenti comments “The most effective propaganda is that which relies on framing rather than on falsehood. By bending the truth rather than breaking it, using emphasis and other auxiliary embellishments, communicators can create a desired impression without resorting to explicit advocacy and without departing too far from the appearance of objectivity. Framing is achieved in the way the news is packaged, the amount of exposure, the placement (front page or buried within, lead story or last), the tone of presentation (sympathetic or slighting), the headlines and photographs, and, in the case of broadcast media, the accompanying visual and auditory effects” Parenti adds “Manipulation often lurks in the things left unmentioned” (Parenti, 1997, pp. 5-7).

Price, Tewksbury and Powers follow this line of reasoning in a study investigating how journalistic story frames can affect the thoughts and feelings of readers. The researchers asked participants to read news articles that were experimentally prepared to manipulate alternative



news frames. They then engaged in a procedure designed to assess which particular cognitive responses were evoked by the various frames. In the context of the study, Price et. al. commented “Instead of explaining the general background and implication of issues, news reports emphasize only the most recent and attention-getting developments....Social issues are thus treated mainly as discreet and isolated events....By activating some ideas, feelings and values rather than others, then the news can encourage particular trains of thought about political phenomena and lead audience members to arrive at more or less predictable conclusions” The team concluded, “By prompting the activation of certain constructs at the expense of others, frames can directly influence what enters the minds of audience members. Although reporters and editors may not be driving the engines of audience decision making, they may nonetheless have some capacity to guide those engines by switching tracks” Price et al also states “A framing effect is one in which salient attributes of a message (its organization, selection of content or thematic structure) render particular thoughts applicable, resulting in their activation and use in evaluations” (Price, Tewksbury and Powers, 1997, pp. 481-506).

Reese et. al. also discuss the issue of value framing. In particular, they explore how the media shore up public support for specifically framed issues by tipping the balance between conflicting values in their favor, hoping that public opinion will follow suit (Reese, et. al., 2001).

Value framing was also a focus of the study “Media Coverage of Political Issues and the Framing of Personal Concerns.” Iorio and Huxman analyzed respondents' discussions of media framing of a variety of personal concerns, including crime, education, family life and health care. The duo suggested that “numerous studies confirm the media’s influence in creating agendas of public issues. Research also points out that media coverage does not ensure the salience individuals attribute to, or perceptions individuals hold of, mediated issues” (Iorio and Huxman, 1996, pp. 97-115).

Iyengar has suggested that there is a correlation of media frames and individual's attribution of social responsibility. These media studies reveal the implicit power of frames of news content in relation to audience cognition, although it is generally acknowledged that people's perceptions may or may not reflect the intention of the framer(s) or the frame(s) found in the text (Iyengar, 1991).

Domke, Shah and Wackman's political study, "The Priming Effects: Accessibility, Association and Activation," utilized a questionnaire that required participants to choose a specific political candidate. This was followed by a series of open-ended questions designed to assess the decision-making strategies used by the subjects in making their selection. The answers were also examined for comments by the participants about candidate integrity. The researchers concluded "Specifically, media framing of issue information—by highlighting some dimensions of issues while excluding other aspects—seems likely to foster priming effects...we posit that framing issues in a manner that focuses on their moral or ethical dimensions can prime voters to 1) make attributions about candidate character, particularly integrity and/or 2) evaluate other political issues in ethical terms....as many scholars argue, media do not merely serve an agenda-setting role in public discourse but, through selection and 'framing' of news and opinion, are crucial in establishing the range of criteria for constructing, debating and resolving social issues" (Domke, Shah and Wackman, 1998, p. 52). Domke et. al. in their discussion, also stated "...What issues news media emphasize, and how those issues are covered, may substantially influence which thoughts or ideas come to mind for voters as they evaluate even seemingly unrelated elements of a political environment" (Domke, Shah and Wackman, 1998, pp. 51-74).

Ryan, Carragee and Schwerner confirm this view in the study "Media, Movements and the Quest for Social Justice." The researchers conducted a content analysis of regional print coverage about a U.S. Supreme Court case that pitted the United Auto Workers (U.A.W.) against Johnson Controls. The U.A.W. was assisted in its efforts to employ news as a political resource

by the Media Research and Action Project, a social research and mobilization group based in Boston College's sociology department. The researchers concluded "Journalistic framing of issues does not develop in a political vacuum; it is influenced by the frames sponsored by multiple social actors, including politicians, organizations, advocates and social movements. News stories, then, become a forum for framing contests in which political actors compete in sponsoring their preferred definitions of political issues. The ability of a frame to dominate news discourse depends on a variety of complex factors, including its sponsor's economic and cultural resources, its sponsor's knowledge of journalistic routines and practices, and its resonance with broader political values or tendencies in the U.S. culture" Ryan et al concludes "Access to news...is distributed inequitably within U.S. society. Those holding institutional and political power have a far greater ability to shape the news agenda than alternative groups or movements" (Ryan, Carragee and Schwerner, 1998, pp. 165-181).

"Once events drive an issue onto the public agenda, stakeholders begin efforts to frame them" Miller and Riechert state. "A stakeholder's primary goal here is to establish a specific point of view as the appropriate frame of the issue...conflict between competing stakeholders is a principle driving force for news" (Miller and Riechert, 1999, p. 8).

Kinder and Sanders implicate the mass media in the formation of public opinion. In examining the view that policy preferences reflect assessments of threats to individual and group interests, they suggest that the mass media share responsibility for the development of these concerns. Although they do not actually assess the presence of these frames in the media, they use an experimental manipulation of the frames that they believe are prominent in media discourse (Kinder and Sanders, 1996).

In the study "Framing Protest: News Media Frames of the Million Man March," Watkins examined network news coverage of this event. The researcher analyzed the dominant framing

practices—problem definition, rhetorical devices, use of sources and images—that are employed by journalists to make sense of a particular expression of political protest.

Watkins states that most media researchers regard news as a manufactured cultural product. While in the business of making news, journalists also make framing judgements, or decisions regarding how to render real world phenomena intelligible. Frame analysis, he contends, seeks to understand the social implications of how journalists organize their representation of the world, and they do it by creating frames. Watkins suggests that journalists actively look for a way to select and organize data from the material world into frames in order to make the labor of news production more manageable. Watkins concludes, however, that "Frames, it is important to note, do not determine what people think" (Watkins, pp. 83-101, 2001).

Scheufele states that research should address the processes that influence the creation of or changes to frames applied by journalists. The key question is what kinds of organizational or structural factors of the media system, or which individual characteristics of journalists, can impact the framing of news content. He adds that the formation of frames is moderated by variables such as ideology, attitudes and professional norms and is eventually reflected in the way journalists frame news coverage; another factor influencing the framing of news is the selection of frames as a result of factors such as the political organization of the medium. The third source of influence on journalistic frames is external sources of influence, such as authorities, interest groups and other elites. How people think about an issue is influenced by the accessibility of frames, Scheufele adds; however, the perceived importance of frames is the outcome of a more conscious process of information gathering and processing. The question of whether audiences adopt media frames or the degree to which they use frames similar to media frames in their own information processing has not been answered (Scheufele, 1999).

The "social actors" as defined by Ryan et.al. are also designated as "stakeholders" by Miller and Riechert, who comment "We use the word stakeholders to refer to individuals and

groups in the policy-making process that 'stand to win or lose as a result of a policy decision'" (Miller and Riechert, 1999, p. 3).

Dearing suggests that "....Just as the agenda-setting process can be studied as diffusion or social change involving institutional actors and nascent groups, through media attention, and on to the actions and nonactions of bureaucrats and elected officials, so too can framing provide a compelling and malleable lens through which to understand political jockeying and media access, issue portrayal in the media, and the meanings assigned to media content by members of the public" (Dearing, 2002, pp. 485-486).

Illustrating the effects of changing journalistic frames on how information is presented to the public, Zaller uses the example of the American Psychiatric Association's position on homosexuality as a case in point. "In the period in which the American Psychiatric Association (APA), as the most authoritative source of secular understanding of this subject, regarded homosexuality as a disease, press coverage of the issue was dominated by antihomosexual stereotypes. Thus, if one looks up homosexuality in *The New York Times* Index of 1950, one finds a request to see the perversion and scandal listings. But when the APA declared, by a poll of its membership in 1974, that homosexuality was no longer to be considered a disease, the press began to employ a 'civil rights' frame of reference alongside the old 'vice' frame, thus offering the public an alternative way of conceptualizing the issue of homosexuality" (Zaller, 1992, p. 316-317).

Mitchell studied the effects of "mood" framing on public behavior in her examination of the public health campaign on genital herpes. She found that a positively framed message highlights the benefits of complying with a desired behavior while a negatively framed message highlights the costs of not complying with a recommended behavior. Messages that express options in terms of losses are "negatively framed" while messages expressed in terms of gains are "positively framed." Mitchell also explored the link between message framing and the inducing of

mood in the viewer. "Since persons are more likely to attend to information that is congruent with their mood, it is evident why they would be persuaded by mood congruent messages" Mitchell stated. "Perhaps positively framed messages are persuasive for those who are in a positive mood" (Mitchell, 2001, pp. 141-152).

Severin and Tankard suggest that current media structure upholds traditional power holders, and that the impact on society includes an increasing information gap between the rich and poor, segmentation of mass media audiences and increased gender inequality in the use of media (Severin and Tankard, 2001).

Andsager and Powers, in their study of media framing of breast cancer, noted the influence of sexual balance in media framing. "Men far outnumber women as newsmakers and sources....While news organizations claim objectivity in their reporting, they do not claim to balance the viewpoints of men and women. The majority of news stories are written by men about men's issues and therefore are not framed from women's perspectives" (Andsager and Powers, 1999).

Dyer and Rhode also concur that underrepresentation of women in the media severely limits perspectives on how women and women's issues are framed "...Gender imbalances in journalism are symptomatic of broader media patterns. Men occupy 90 percent of upper-level Hollywood executive positions, play two-thirds of the leads in prime-time television, supply 90 percent of the narrator's voices in television commercials, and monopolize 90 percent of televised sporting events. The inadequate representation of women in media decision making is mirrored in the media's inadequate representation of women's perspectives and concerns....Efforts to increase the coverage of women's perspectives are often met with confession and avoidance. The marginalization of women occurs not only through failure to represent their perspectives but also through failure to recognize them as independent agents, apart from their relation to men" (Rhode, 1995). Dyer ties in predominantly male ownership of media with the lack of substantive

coverage on women's issues. Since women own and manage relatively few mass media institutions, they have less access to media to tell the truths of their experiences in effective and meaningful ways (Dyer, 1993).

Dow, in "Prime-Time Feminism: Television, Media Culture and the Women's Movement Since 1970," discusses the framing of nontraditional feminist women by the entertainment media by offering a perspective on the sitcom character Murphy Brown. This character embodies media constructions of post-feminism concepts by showing the negative consequences of feminine independence. The "joke" of the show is that of a woman who has exchanged her feminine skills and qualities for success in the public world of broadcasting. Murphy is a comedic, almost masculine figure, unable to bake, talk about feelings or maintain a romantic relationship. The fact that producers later saddled the character with a child as another "joke" is one example of the negative media framing associated with childless, independent women (Dow, 1996).

Journalistic frames are influenced by many political, cultural and economic forces; "news routines" followed by journalists, which often constrict information sources to spokespersons who represent traditional sources of power; the focus on dramatic, attention-getting events which deflect attention from society's need to solve underlying problems and instead attributes blame to the individual; and the lack of access to the news media for minorities, alternative groups and women, which limits their ability to provide a balanced public view of their lives and issues.

Although frames, as Watkins notes, do not necessarily determine what people think, they do appear to contribute greatly to society's view of specific individuals, groups, events or issues. The media, as a powerful social institution, has the capacity to significantly influence its audience in order to set the public agenda.

The substantive lack of power that women have on media content and the capability of the press to substantially influence the public's view of a social issue was fully illustrated by the media's coverage of the women's movement.

### News Media Framing of the Women's Movement

In the study “How Media Frames More Public Opinion: An Analysis of the Women’s Movement,” Terkildsen and Schnell examined news magazine’s coverage of the women’s movement, using a content analysis of three major news weeklies—*Time*, *Newsweek* and *U.S. News and World Report* between 1950 and 1995, and ascertained five unique frames from the 1950s through the 1990s; a sex roles frame, a feminism frame, a political rights frame, an economic rights frame and an anti-feminism frame. The two suggested “If only one political group’s frame is included in an issue’s coverage or journalists choose to bypass elite packages by constructing their own thematic spins, then media-constructed versions of reality influence public opinion over and above elites’ attempts to structure the policy debate. In this manner, issue frames involve a complex interaction between the media, government actors and interest groups” In their results, Terkildsen and Schnell found that “Anti-feminism emerged as a frame in a 1969 article discussing the ideological indictments of women’s liberation. The thematic shorthand that eventually took place described women who were happy with the status quo and traditional roles. As issues like the Equal Rights Amendment, abortion reform and support for women’s traditional roles fueled an antifeminist movement, articles focused on the political and ideological divisions between women and the continued necessity for gender protectionism. Although highly similar in their ideological messages, the gender roles and anti-feminism frames differed in one important manner: the traditional gender roles frame pitted emerging feminists against societal norms, while the anti-feminist frame pitted feminists against women supportive of the separate spheres ideology”

The two also state “....A theory of framing asserts that issues, in and of themselves, can be arranged or presented in multiple fashions and as such influence citizen’s ensuing issue



considerations....Although framing may be capable of increasing issue salience by pairing a specific frame with issue coverage, framing's real effects are due to the changed considerations that come to bear when forming an opinion and how these changes can results in a net shift in policy support. This change is due to the language of that unique frame, not merely to the issue itself being primed" (Terkildsen and Schnell, 1997, pp. 879-900).

Rhodebeck suggests "Framing provides a way to think about how information is presented to the public. News frames are persistent patterns of selection, interpretation and presentation that lend order and meaning to complex issues, processes and events...since news frames tend to reflect the dominant cultural perspective, groups challenging this perspective often criticize the manner in which the mainstream news media portray their interests and actions. Criticisms of gendered framing focus on the stereotypical presentations of women, the neglect of issues important to women and the lukewarm evaluations of women's achievements" (Rhodebeck, 1998, pp. 712-713).

In the study, "Constructing Reality: Print Media's Framing of the Women's Movement, 1966-1986," Ashley and Olsen suggested that "Women involved in social protest have been treated differently, depending on the issue and their tactics; the media have lost interest when women protest on behalf of their own needs...the presence of framing techniques may, in turn, influence the reality provided by the media and shape the audience's understanding of the issue" (Ashley and Olsen, 1998, pp. 9-10). The sample in this content analysis study included a daily newspaper, *The New York Times*, *Time* and *Newsweek*. The research spanned 20 years to capture the conservative backlash against the movement by observing any differences in news coverage of the group. In their findings, Ashley and Olsen stated "Coverage was somewhat comparable across publications sampled, but there is an obvious difference in the way the two groups were portrayed. In particular, the press delegitimized the feminists and legitimized the anti-feminists. Feminists were depicted as disorganized. 'The Movement has little organization, few chants or

ringing slogans,' a September 1970 *Time* article stated. Phyllis Schlafly, organizer of the Eagle Forum, an anti-ERA group, was painted as 'the enemy...who heads the well-organized, nationwide 'Stop ERA' movement, and whose troops in the past have usually seemed to out-debate and out-smart the ill-prepared proponents,' suggested *The New York Times* in 1976. The coverage of conflict (considered to be a masculine sphere) and focus on competition (in direct opposition to the more feminine gendered tradition of cooperation) made the females appear to be no longer feminine" (Ashley and Olsen, 1998, pp. 9-10).

Zoch and Turk also used a content analysis method to analyze three southern newspapers over a time period of ten years; the focus was to determine the inclusion of female sources in newspaper stories. The researchers state that "Feminist researchers believe that the inequitable distribution of power between men and women creates a system where women 'lose their voices' and become, in effect, 'invisible'" They also commented "A media consumer might infer that this lack of importance is the result of women not holding positions of authority and/or their lack of credible, valuable information. And of course we know that's not necessarily reality. Or the truth" (Zoch and Turk, 1998, pp. 762-775).

Robinson comments "...If enough people think studying the media is a waste of time, then the media themselves can seem less influential than they really are. Then they get off the hook for doing what they do best: promoting a white, upper-middle-class, male view of the world that urges the rest of us to sit passively on our sofas and fantasize about consumer goods while they handle the important stuff like the economy, the environment or child care" (Robinson, 1995, pp. 138-140).

"Like all propagandists, media people seek to predetermine our perception of a subject with a positive or negative label...in accordance with the canons of good journalism, the media is supposed to tap competing sources to get both sides of an issue. In fact, both sides are seldom

accorded equal prominence. Furthermore, both sides of a story are not necessarily all sides” Parenti states (Parenti, 1997, pp. 5-7).

Susan Faludi, in *Backlash: The Undeclared War Against Women*, stated “The press...cosmeticized the scowling face of antifeminism while blackening the feminist eye. In the process, it popularized the backlash beyond the New Right’s wildest dreams. The press didn’t set out with this, or any other intention; like any large institution, its movements are not premeditated or programmatic, just grossly susceptible to the prevailing political currents. Even so, the press, carried by tides it rarely fathomed, acted as a force that swept the general public, powerfully shaping the way people would think and talk about the feminist legacy and the ailments it supposedly inflicted on women. It coined the terms everyone used: 'the man shortage,' 'the biological clock,' 'the mommy track,' and 'postfeminism'" (Faludi, 1991, p. 77).

Rhode adds that "Whatever media leaders' reluctance to chronicle the rebirth of feminism in the 1960s and early 1970s, they had no such hesitation in reporting its demise....who are these mother-bashing, man-hating harpies....? Here, one of the main joys of journalists is apparent: the blissful freedom from footnoting" (Rhode, 1995, p. 685).

During the "post feminist" years, women in the 1980s and 1990s received the message from the media that they were supposed to perform "equally" in the workplace and at home. Media coverage of lifestyle changes unwittingly helped to expose this double bind. Media messages told women they were liberated, while visual images showed them how miserable they were trying to be superwomen (Creedon, 1993).

Equally disconcerting, one of popular culture's strongest influences, advertising, continues to depict women in demeaning stereotypes. Lazier and Kendrick comment that "Today's advertisements do not reflect the significant strides (both socially and statistically) made by women in the past two decades into the workforce....Ads ignore the booming percentage of women becoming doctors, lawyers, elected politicians, entrepreneurs, corporate executives and

board members, business travelers or as decision makers for major purchases" (Lazier and Kendrick, 1993, pp. 199-219).

Douglas states "A burgeoning consumer culture needs one thing—consumers. Consumers, of course, need money. But America's consumer culture was predicated on the notion that women were the major consumers of most goods—that was their job, after all—and that, to sell to them, you had to emphasize their roles as wives and mothers, because it was in these capacities, not in their capacities as secretaries or nurses, that women bought" (Douglas, 1994, p. 56).

Dow makes the point that, while the media do not reject the notion that inequality exists, it does resist the notion that this is an undesirable state of affairs. "The issue, then, was not whether equality existed, but whether it was desirable. The commentators seem to be willing to grant the desirability of equality...but they also seem dedicated to the notion that such equality should and could be achieved without upsetting traditional gender roles, functions and relationships" The news media, she adds, in the end, almost always asserts that the world is still relatively stable and the status quo is preferable to the prospect of radical change (Dow, 1999, pp. 143-157).

Although the women's movement received media attention as a "newsworthy" issue in the late 1960s through the early 1970s, interest in the topic diminished by the late 1970s as the anti-feminist movement gained momentum. Additionally, the challenge to traditional bastions of male power and influence by feminists fueled a backlash that resulted in subsequent negative portrayals of the women's movement in the media.

By framing feminists as caricatures of hairy-legged, man-hating harpies; by marginalizing women's very real problems concerning equal pay for equal work, reproductive freedom and other inequities; and by polarizing contentious issues—in effect, pitting women against each other—the media essentially contributed to the "death" of the feminist movement and negated the chance for any serious dialogue on the issues raised by its adherents.

In addition to forfeiting the battle for equal rights, many women also lost the opportunity to challenge the social mandate requiring them to become mothers.

### *Images of Voluntarily Childless Women*

In 1964, 13.2 percent of all American women ages fifteen to forty-four had never borne a child. By 1976, the figure had risen to 35.1 percent—a jump of almost 200 percent in twelve years, despite tremendous advancements in infertility treatments. According to *American Demographics*, “The aging baby-boom generation will make childless couples one of the biggest growing segments of the next two decades” (Cain, 2001, p. 9). Since 1980, the number of childless women aged 35-39 has nearly doubled, to about 2 million. Still, childless women are expected to work longer hours, get fewer deductions on their income tax and are castigated—or worse, pitied—for choosing a life without children (Rau, 1996).

In fact, demographers predict that the trend will continue and that as many as one-quarter of the women born between 1956 and 1972 will never give birth. Population experts base most of the research about childlessness on women, but the same pattern seems to be repeating itself among the male population. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, as many as 19 percent of married couples in 2000 chose not to have children; a decade ago, that figure was below 10 percent. Since the 1970s—about the last time that medical references described childless women as “disturbed”—the number of childless women has been rising steadily.

There is a direct correlation between education and childlessness. In 1994, 28 percent of women with bachelor's degrees—and 34 percent of women with graduate or professional degrees—reached age 40 without having children, according to the U.S. Census Bureau (Thomas, 1996). Childlessness has grown most notably among older women. The Census Bureau reports that among women 40 to 44 years old, childlessness soared to 19 percent, up from just 10 percent

two decades earlier, according to 2000 census figures (Census 2000). And The National Center for Health Statistics confirms that the percentage of women of childbearing age who define themselves as voluntarily childless has risen over the decades: from 2.4 percent in 1982, to 4.3 percent in 1990, to 6.6 percent in 1995. That adds up to 4.1 million women saying no to motherhood in 1995 (Paul, 2001).

As increasing numbers of women postpone motherhood—either by choice or circumstance—the percentage that will remain childless throughout their lives is approaching the record 22 percent set by women born around the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Some 18 percent of the nation's women are now ending their childbearing years—age 44, according to federal statisticians—without having had children. If this trend continues into the early part of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, as demographers expect, the social and economic landscape of the country could be altered in some dramatic ways. In part because of the new childlessness—primarily among the white middle class—experts predict America in this century will be older, more ethnically diverse and much less the land of the traditional nuclear family. And such influences continue to produce profound changes in the economics of the American family. By 2010, according to projections by *American Demographics*, the number of married couples without children is expected to increase by nearly 50 percent to nearly 3.1 million (Mitchell, 2000). Meanwhile, the number of married couples with children under 18 is expected to drop slightly to 23.5 million even as the population grows (Sirica, 1994).

National statistics show that the number of women who remain childless hovers around 20 percent, according to The National Center for Health Statistics.

In an article for Salon.com, Joan Walsh, editor of *Salon News*, states “...20 percent of all American women over 40 are childless, a rate that’s doubled in just 20 years” (Walsh, 2002).

“The baby boomers who have been driving up the childless numbers are at the confluence of a number of social trends that have been building as the group has come of age over the last 20

years: the rise in the number of women in well-paid professions; the widely held view that the decision not to have a family is perfectly valid; the widespread use of modern contraceptives and the legal availability of abortion; and the increasing costs, in both dollars and crimped lifestyles, of raising children" reporter Jack Sirica comments in *The Cleveland Plain Dealer* (Sirica, 1994, p. 1-E).

According to The National Center of Health Statistics, nearly 7 million women of childbearing age defined themselves as voluntarily childless in 1995, up from 2.4 million in 1982 (Heliman, 2002). Census 2000 indicates that only twenty-four percent of all U.S. households are comprised of two parents and children today, a figure that's been sliding down from forty-five percent in 1960 (Ebenkamp, 2001). Many women—married women in particular—are finding their decision to stay childfree treated as a radical, even subversive idea. Radical, perhaps, but no longer rare. The number making that choice has been growing steadily for nearly two decades. In 1994, nearly 19 percent of American women reached the age of 40 without having children. In 1976, it was about 11 percent (Thomas, 1996). In 1984, 15.4 percent of women 35-39 were childless, voluntary or otherwise; in 1994, it was 19.6 percent (Mitchell, 1997).

The demographic profile of voluntarily childless women, as compiled by the U.S. National Center for Health Statistics, shows they're likely to be in more egalitarian marriages, less traditional, less religious, more highly educated, white, urban and employed in professional occupations (Smith, 1998). Many experts say women and couples without children are sometimes branded as selfish, unwilling to sacrifice their material goals to raise a family. Women in particular are seen as having a psychological defect, something to explain their lack of interest in bearing children. Most often it's attributed to a bad childhood (Eveld, 1999). There is also the presumption that having a child is central to femininity, that without this desire or ability women are unfeminine and abnormal. Society still takes for granted that "woman" equals "mother" equals

"wife" equals "adult" and this presumption still remains a part of medical, political and public discourses (Letherby and Williams, 1999).

This rise in childless marriages in a nation that is seemingly embracing children, parenting and "family values" has raised sharp criticism from political and religious leaders.

These supporters of "traditional family values" blame important developments in modern society—especially feminism and greater sexual freedom—for a whole host of social tensions and problems. This scapegoating often misdirects concern about genuine social issues (Cherry, 1998/1999). For many people, "childless" implies a person with something missing from her life, whether she is described as being "childless" in a "voluntary" or "involuntary" manner, although the former are more often viewed as selfish while the latter frequently incur pity. Either way, mothers are seen as "proper" women, while women without children are perceived as "improper" and treated as "other" (Letherby and Williams, 1999). In recent years, many voluntarily childless women, men and couples have now adapted the designation "childfree," which implies a positive choice, not a lack.

The current "for the family" and "for the children" movements aren't just political fads stirred up by the politically hungry, by parents convinced that their interests and the national interest must be identical or by marketers with greedy eyes fixed on the kiddie market. In these procreation-obsessed times, with motherhood, fatherhood, parenting and children driving the zeitgeist of America, celebrities, TV shows, news programs and talk shows all embrace kid-mania (Burkett, 2000).

Meyers states "One of the results of feminist initiatives in the United States is that women's motherhood decisions are not surrounded by a highly voluntaristic rhetoric. It is worth noticing that the conception of choice invoked by advocates of reproductive freedom is lopsided. The idea is to empower women to delay or space out childbearing. Seldom, if ever, explicitly mentioned, the option of altogether abstaining is implicitly denied. Since the current (albeit



outmoded) paradigm of the family is a social unit comprised of a heterosexual couple and their children, the concept of family planning does not include refusing to have children. for that would amount to family prevention, which sounds like blasphemy in an era of pietistic pronouncements about 'family values'" (Meyers, 2001, pp. 735-773).

Yet those who have chosen the childfree lifestyle point to other factors that indicate parenthood is not always a bed of roses. Ann Landers' survey of readers in the 1970s, in which she asked, "We know you love your children, but knowing what you know today, would you choose parenthood again?" The response—out of 10,000 postcards, 70 percent said no (Brecher, 1995).

Those who do take on parenthood and are not happy with their choice most often elect to stay silent. Willen comments "Every nation is pronatalistic. If it was not (sic) society could not live on. The expectation on the individual is to reproduce and adjust to the parental role. If he or she does not, it is likely to be perceived as a personal failure and therefore bias by social desirability is much more probable when subjects are asked directly about their parental experience. High rates of child neglect and abuse are obvious indications of disappointments in the parental experience" (Willen, 1996, p. 513).

Culturally transmitted mythologies of rapturous motherhood subsidize the refusal to reflect on the realities. Heedlessly absorbing cultural attitudes valorizing procreation together with a romanticized image of motherhood removes motherhood from the realm of choice and preempts exercising agentic skills. The flip side of automatic childbearing is obsession, anxiety and despair. It seems, then, that the casual assumption that one will become a mother masks a desire that has the rigid obdurate character of a compulsion. Diverse religious traditions mandate procreative heterosexuality by condemning "barren" marriages. Moreover, they figure the woman as the mother; Marian imagery, the deification of Mary, the mother of Jesus, for example, powerfully identifies womanhood with motherhood and represents the mother as a beatific,

munificent dispenser of love and forgiveness. The doctrine of "true womanhood," which declares childbearing to be woman's destiny, and the "cult of domesticity," which elaborates this destiny into a child-rearing function, have deep roots in the baleful history of reproductive politics in the United States. Popular media, such as magazines, television and movies fortify the pronatalist juggernaut by depicting motherhood as the only credible form of fulfillment for women. Negative stereotypes of childfree women match and buttress idealized matrigynist figurations. Matrigynist figurations frame women's introspection. They render promaternity feelings and inclinations vivid and compelling, while eclipsing doubts, misgivings, worries and fears. Pronatalist doctrine saturates women's consciousness and chokes off the options available to them (Meyers, 2001).

May notes that it was not until after World War II that reproduction became a national obsession, and childlessness a unique identity. The shift was rooted in the postwar turn toward private life as the only salvation for the nation and the self. With the onset of the cold war, the family surfaced as the ideological center of national culture, while public and community life declined. The fierce pronatalism of the baby-boom years marked infertility as profoundly tragic and voluntary childlessness as downright subversive (May, 1995).

"Over the last two centuries, scientists have persisted in asserting that women's natural maternal urges are subverted by educational, occupational or political aspirations, equal rights, divorce and birth control. Medical literature portrays childless women as the ultimate 'bad mothers,' who, by withholding mothering altogether, are responsible for the downfall of national morality, home and family, the human race itself" French comments (French, 1992, 152).

Faux asserts that "A more subversive reason that voluntarily childless women have not been studied as extensively as they should have been undoubtedly centers on societal prejudice against justifying their existence or providing them with a more positive image than they now enjoy. Voluntarily childless women have been depicted as selfish and even neurotic. The result of the lack of research about voluntarily childless women is that the myths—that childless women are

selfish, that childless women only care about material things, that childless women dislike children—persist or are misinterpreted in the face of a few hard facts to explain the phenomenon of voluntarily childless women" (Faux, 1984, p. 11).

While some feminists are urging a re-evaluation of mothering and a return to the family, the assumption that this is women's "natural" role has been predominant in a decade influenced by conservative leaders. The result has been a new focus on the "family" as the warrant for political and social reform. The late 1980s and 1990s witnessed a strong resurgence in pronatalism. Infertility and reproductive technology have been the focus of national discussions that have addressed the exploitation of women as medical guinea pigs, but never questioned the acute pressure to reproduce that women are responding to by seeking out infertility treatments and risking questionable medical procedures. The decision not to have children at all, or not to see mothering as the defining moment in women's lives, is given little or no play in this current reinfatuation with the family, both within the culture at large, and within feminism itself (Stearny, 1994, pp. 145).

Elinor Burkett, who outlined the plight of the childless in America in her book, *The Baby Boon*, states "Even in postmodern, postfeminist America, girls grow up learning that women cannot be happy or fulfilled without children. Women teach one another that, without children, they can't keep their men. Adulation is heaped on women whose only accomplishment is overdoing fertility drugs and bearing sextuplets. Every force in popular culture—from women's magazines and *Lifetime* 'television for women' to Katie Couric, Madonna and the First Lady—broadcasts the same message: Women are mothers" (Burkett, 2000, p. 184).

Dr. Mandy Ireland, author of the book *Reconceiving Women: Separating Motherhood from Female Identity*, stated, in an interview with ABC News, that cultural assumptions about women who actively chose not to become mothers "....Are some pretty standard stereotypes, like 'they don't like kids.' Or 'they don't have any maternal part of them,' or 'they're too career

driven,' or 'they're selfish" Society generally assumes that there's an inherent generosity in choosing to have children" Ireland adds "A capacity that's not necessarily there" (Hellman, 2002).

In her column in the *Orlando Weekly*, childless reporter Liz Langley stated "People with kids have overwhelming cultural support for their lifestyle in our family-mad society. You will hear people stupidly tell a childless woman 'You should have kids' but you will never find them asking a mother of three, 'Was that last one necessary?' ...Mothers are often cast as unsung heroes, but the women who forgo motherhood out of a different sense of duty are unseen and underappreciated" (Langley, 2002, p. E-1).

"We are with childlessness where we were with homosexuality," said Madelyn Cain, author of *The Childless Revolution*. "We always talk about family-friendly America. It is always part and parcel of a politician's package. But the package they're selling doesn't match the general public" (Sealey, 2002).

"America has a long tradition of pushing childless women to the margins" Elaine Tyler May, author of *Barren in the Promised Land*, asserts. "For most of this country's history, women without children have been seen as deviant, pathetic or dangerous. In colonial times, married women who didn't have children were likely to be accused of witchcraft. At the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, when immigrant women were having large numbers of children, President Theodore Roosevelt chastised white women by not doing their part to create future generations of Americans" (May, 1995, p. 61).

"At the present time, for a woman to come out openly against motherhood on principle is physically dangerous....Until the taboo is lifted, until the decision not to have children or not to have them 'naturally' is at least as legitimate as traditional childbearing, women are as good as forced into their female roles" Stearney states (Stearney, 1994, pp. 145).

As a society, we automatically bestow kudos on just about every women who reproduces, because we still believe at bottom that motherhood isn't something you should think about: it should be something completely natural that you 'do' when the maternity beeper goes off (Kling, 1996).

In *Backlash*, Faludi states "If the 'infertility epidemic' was the first round of fire in the pronatal campaign of the '80s, then the 'birth dearth' was second. At least the leaders of this campaign were more honest: they denounced liberated women for choosing to have fewer or no children" Faludi goes on to examine the influence of Ben Wattenberg, a syndicated columnist and senior fellow at the American Enterprises Institute, who authored *The Birth Dearth*. Wattenberg's birth dearth theories, although criticized as xenophobic and racist, were broadly publicized, as was his widely held view that women who do not have children are selfish, neurotic and career-driven (Faludi, 1991, pp. 32-34).

In her book *A Lesser Life: The Myth of Women's Liberation*, Sylvia Ann Hewlitt states, "Many elite professional women are single or divorced, and a large proportion remain childless. Surveys of women executives and high-level professionals show that more than half have reached age 40 without having children. In fact, census figures show that 20 percent of all highly educated women (women with graduate training) remain childless. But although elite professional women often do not have children, for many it is not a preferred choice" (Hewlitt, 1986). She offers no research evidence to back up this claim.

Hewlett's book received substantial media praise, including rave reviews from the *Los Angeles Herald Examiner*, *The Chicago Tribune* and the *San Francisco Chronicle*. Her theories that the women's liberation movement had turned contemporary females into lonely careerists with empty lives were quoted by hundreds of journalists, newscasters and columnists (Faludi, 1991).

Columnist Stephanie Mencimer wrote in *The Washington Monthly*, "....If conservatives had hoped that withholding public support for working mothers would bring back June Cleaver, they were badly mistaken. Instead, a growing number of American women have found another way around the problem: they've stopped having children" Mencimer adds that a quarter of American women born between 1956 and 1972 will never have children. "It's the forces driving widespread childlessness that should concern us" she adds. "America's disappearing children are the canaries in our coal mines, a warning that our social and economic system is seriously out of whack" (Mencimer, 2001, pp. 14-19).

Contrary to popular opinion, married childfree women have marriages that are at least as happy and satisfying as women who are mothers, and they are no more likely to divorce (Baber and Allen, 1992). Tanya Koropecykj-Cox, in the study "Loneliness and Depression in Middle and Old Age: Are the Childless More Vulnerable?" stated "Surveys consistently report no differences between the childless and parents on subjective measures of well-being such as happiness, life satisfaction and loneliness. Gender socialization and expectations emphasize parental status as more salient for women throughout their lives. Social norms have defined women's adult identities, social value and development around the normatively prescribed role of mother, whereas men are generally evaluated in their roles and accomplishments outside the family. Women report feeling stigmatized because of their childlessness" (Koropecykj-Cox, 1998, p. S-303). Koropecykj-Cox's results showed that permanent childlessness does not represent a statistically significant, universal disadvantage in terms of greater loneliness or depression for either men or women. She adds "The absence of any strong, adverse effect of childlessness among women deserves attention. Pronatalist social norms experienced by today's older cohorts have constrained women's choices and have marginalized childless women, whereas men have largely been exempt from these pressures....The current results suggest that the pressures and

stigma experienced by women may not have strong, lasting consequences in later life" (Koropecj-Cox, 1998, pp. S303-S312).

It is true that white American culture does provide an occasional positive model of the "childless" women in the figure of Katherine Hepburn. But such models are not all that positive. for the message they convey is that it's okay to be childless only if you do something really spectacular with your life. A woman who does not have children must prove herself exceptional in achievement in order to compensate for her failure to be a "real" woman. If a woman does not have children and lives an ordinary life of no remarkable achievement, she is assumed to be an enigma at best, unfinished, at worst....Not being a mother in our culture brings with it great costs, the principle one being social stigma. Even today, women who do not have children are commonly perceived as deficient, aberrant and even pathetic (Sanford and Donovan, 1984).

Writing for *The Scholar*, contributor Christopher Clausen comments "Alarmist media stories on childless professional couples alternate with inspirational features about gentle, enlightened fathers who stay home to change the diapers while their wives earn millions as trial lawyers or investment bankers. The willed-childlessness alternative may be easier in some ways than it was thirty years ago, but its status in most quarters is much closer to uneasy tolerance than full acceptance" (Clausen, 2002, pp. 111-121).

"The sheer lack of coverage this topic receives in the media speaks volumes" Madalyn Cain, author of *The Childless Revolution*, states. "Advertisers, politicians and educators fail to target childless women as a group...these women are seemingly nonexistent. What little knowledge we do have of the childless woman is based on negative stereotypes, such as the child-hating workaholic" (Cain, 2001, p. 140).

Alexander, Rubinstein, Goodman and Luborsky comment "American culture is strongly pronatalist. The role of being a mother is culturally central, and although altered with age, does not appear to diminish in significance in later life. Positive images of aging include the ability to

take satisfaction from having raised a family" Additionally, Alexander et. al. found that the most popular conception of nonparenthood was that it is a religiously immoral, irresponsible, unnatural, rejecting of normative gender roles and associated with maladjustment (Alexander, Rubinstein, Goodman and Luborsky, 1992, p. 618).

Negative framing of voluntarily childless women is also a factor in the reporting of health news. The results of several medical studies that showed the possibility that childlessness might be a factor for breast cancer, for example, were widely publicized. Yadlon asserts that these discussions of "risk factors" correlate with the media's tendency to place the blame for disease on individual conduct, rather than other contributing factors. She also suggests that such blame is the results of the media's attempt to confirm hegemonic codes of femininity. She adds that research on hormonal factors affecting breast cancer has primarily emphasized reproductive choices as a contributing factor.

"Although research on hormonal factors includes a variety of elements (age at first menstruation, age at menopause, reproduction, and the use of artificial hormones like birth control pills and estrogen replacement therapy), the risk factor of reproduction is the site where 'life-style' is reintroduced into breast cancer discourse. While reproduction is represented as a life-style-choice, it is simultaneously assumed to be the 'natural' course of the mature female body. This creates a situation where culpability can enter the discussion. In other words, women can 'choose' not to follow the 'natural' course of their bodies, yet to choose wrongly has serious repercussions" (Yadlon, 1997, p. 659, 665).

In a *Houston Chronicle* article, staff writer Cynthia Thomas states, "Many women find their decision to stay child-free treated as a radical, even subversive, idea." She quotes Laurie Lisle, author of *Without Child: Challenging the Stigma of Childlessness*, who says "We have the highest level of child neglect and abuse in this country that we've ever had. And I think this is a



consequence of the mindless pronatalism that assumes that every woman needs to have children and should have children” (Thomas, 1996).

In the study, "The Framing of Feminists and Feminism in News and Public Affairs Programs in U.S. Electronic Media,," Lind and Salo found in their content analysis that women and motherhood are profoundly linked in the images presented by the media. "Motherhood was also a great concern for the media. References to children and babies abounded, with woman-child co-occurring 519 times, woman-children 473 times, women-and-kids 322 times, women-pregnant 332 times and women-pregnancy 125 times" (Lind and Salo, 2002, p. 219).

Hird and Abshoff, in their scholarly discussion on voluntarily childless women, posit the notion that the modern notion of "motherhood" as a social role for women, rather than a sexual reproductive role, is a relatively recent invention. Current family studies and feminist literature on voluntarily childless women reveals an indelible association between women and maternity. Voluntarily childless women tend to be portrayed as white, tertiary educated and middle-class, who preference their own careers over raising children. Indeed, they add, childless women are often constituted as desiring to be (like) men by devoting greater time to their paid careers and rejecting motherhood as an inadequate or less valuable contribution to society. Hird and Abshoff also found that, in the U.S., childless rates have increased from ten percent in 1976 to seventeen and a half percent for women between the ages of forty and forty-four, and to almost twenty percent for women between the ages of thirty-five and thirty-nine in 1995. They agree that the comparatively high incidence of voluntary childlessness in recent decades is an effect of contemporary social, political and economic factors, including contraceptive technology, the increase of women's participation in the paid workforce, changing gender roles brought about by the Women's Rights movement and increases in women's educational levels. They add "To the extent that women's identities continue to expand beyond motherhood, we may expect the proportion of voluntary childless to increase in Western Society. Given that children are less an

economic necessity, and more an economic burden taken on to fulfill adults' desires, the reasons for having children have significantly changed" (Hird and Abshoff, 1999, pp. 348, 351, 361).

Hird and Abshoff also state "Childless individuals are 'encouraged' to reproduce for a variety of reasons, including the belief that old age without children is lonely, childless individuals will regret not having children, and that children 'owe' their own parents the opportunity to be grandparents. This pressure is not limited to family and friends, but emanates from co-workers, acquaintances, and sometimes strangers" (Hird and Abshoff, 1999, p. 355).

Park asserts that research has consistently found that the voluntarily childless are perceived the most negatively of members of all family sizes. Intentionally childless women and men are seen as less well-adjusted, less nurturing, more materialistic, more selfish and less happy in their lives and marriages than are parents of any number of children (Park, 2001).

Reading and Amatea suggest that, although they are growing in numbers, childless women are seldom viewed favorably. Instead, their parenthood choice has often been viewed as a deviant pattern fostered as a result of being the unfortunate victims of early childhood trauma. They add that due to the unprecedented levels in the numbers of working women, many of today's childless women may have chosen not to have children as a way to minimize the stress of multiple role commitments and to maximize the rewards of proven areas of competence (Reading and Amatea, 1986).

Faux adds "The sad truth is that American society has been geared toward encouraging everyone—except the mentally deficient—to think they can afford children, even when this is not actually the case. And although women have been enjoying the relative freedom of an antinatalist era in the past decade, over the long haul, the United States has mostly been a pronatalist society. It has certainly, for most of its existence, been a culture that does not look with favor on women who choose to remain childless when they might have children. In a sense, the 'image problem' of childless women may perhaps be the ultimate form of pronatalist pressure, serving as it does to

ostracize those who 'dare' choose childlessness and to warn those contemplating it of what lies ahead for them" (Faux, 1984, p. 66, 120).

"Social observers say that at least part of the current child-free friction is caused by something much deeper, by a society in flux. At issue, they say, are things like changing attitudes about individual rights versus collective responsibilities; rapidly-developing birth and fertility technologies that have allowed parents to choose children as if they were commodities; and a society so affluent, with such increasingly independent individuals living in it, that self-absorption has become something of a way of life" Terry suggests (Terry, 2000, p. 101).

May states that "Voluntary childlessness increased after the 1960s, but it was not a new phenomenon, nor did the stigma surrounding the childless entirely disappear. What changed in the 1970s was the visibility and stridency of the voluntarily childless. For the first time, advocates for the childfree began to argue that voluntary childlessness represented not simply a legitimate alternative to parenthood, but a better lifestyle—better for individuals, better for couples, better for the planet" (May, 1995, p. 182). She adds "The childless do not have different values than the rest of the society. But they articulate their hopes and dreams because they are so often frustrated in their pursuit of happiness. The particular reproductive culture that has emerged in the late twentieth century is grounded in a society that looks to the family to solve its problems, but offers the family little in the way of support" (May, 1995, p. 258).

Ireland comments "That there may be something disquieting in reading about a woman whose chosen path includes a choice not to be a mother indicates the degree to which gender identity and personal identity have been confused in the understanding of women; fewer such feelings generally arise upon reading of men whose chosen life paths exclude fatherhood" (Ireland, 1993, p. 90). She adds "Women who are not mothers threaten society with the loss of the presumed adult identity for women. By not ever becoming mothers and invalidating by their very presence the universality of this restricted female identity, they may also seem to undermine the

bases of gender identity for men. This subtle, and perhaps deeper threat, helps explain why patriarchal society seems to have a stake in keeping the childless woman as the 'invisible woman,' particularly when she elects her childless state with scant signs of anguish or deviance" (Ireland, 1993, p. 133).

Macklin asserts that the consequences of voluntarily childlessness are not completely clear; however, she states that research has indicated that Americans tend to hold strong pronatalist attitudes and that voluntarily childless couples experience some degree of social disapproval. She also comments "There must be some revision of the traditional family-developmental framework, which assumes that most individuals proceed through identifiable stages of preparation, work, marriage, children and retirement. As it is now clear, adulthood is not as ordered as it may have been, roles and options occur in different sequences for different individuals, and issues once resolved may be repeatedly reopened. To find patterns in this plethora of transition is an overwhelming task, but crucial if theory is to be based on reality" (Macklin, 1980, pp. 909, 916).

In the article "Childless by Choice," writer Carolyn Mean comments "Fine parenting begins with the recognition that there are sacrifices and losses in having children, as there are sacrifices and losses in not having them. What surprises me is that the decision not to have children is given far more scrutiny in our culture than the decision to have them" (Mean, 2000).

Although voluntarily childless women continue to grow in number and visibility, women who make a conscious decision not to have children remain the subject of controversy, conjecture and, in many cases, public condemnation. While acceptance of women in the workplace, female politicians and other break-through identities for the feminine gender increases, it is still considered taboo for a woman, particularly a married woman, to forsake motherhood.

The media appear to reflect these cultural norms in their framing of voluntarily childless women by either presenting them as neurotic, selfish careerists or negating them by totally ignoring their existence.

The review of the literature establishes how the social and cultural changes in the decades since the late 1970s—including the "death" of feminism, increasing consumerism and the rise in conservative political leaders—led up to an increase in pronatalist values and attitudes. In a culture that praises "family values" and promotes motherhood, childfree women have been marginalized and viewed in an increasingly negative light.

### *Statement of the Research Aims*

The purpose of this study is to explore the research question "How do the media frame voluntarily childless women?" In the context of this thesis, voluntarily childless women are defined as those who are 1) not infertile, to the best of their knowledge; 2) are presently or have previously been involved in a heterosexual relationship; 3) do not have biological children of their own; and 4) have made a conscious, permanent decision not to have children. The intent of the research is twofold: first, to analyze the types of frames used by an individual media outlet when focusing on voluntarily childless women; and secondly, to establish whether that framing is positive, negative or neutral.

This project will use a content analysis of materials from one designated media outlet to examine the portrayals of voluntarily childless women and will also analyze the changes in the framing of voluntarily childless women over two distinct time periods in order to understand the cultural, social and political influences that affect the frames.

## CHAPTER III.

### METHOD

A computer assisted content analysis was used to define and compare the framing issues in this study, utilizing a technique called frame mapping.

An innovative software program, VBPro, created by University of Tennessee communications professor M. Mark Miller, was used to analyze the data. VBPro uses computer algorithms to find terms that tend to cluster together and are used exclusively by one or another of the stakeholders in a designated issue. This procedure is used primarily for issues and/or topics where competing stakeholders have distinct, specifically stated opposing positions and articulate their viewpoints in the media in order to solidify support from those who appreciate their point of view and to win new converts to gain more power for their aims (Miller, 1997). A detailed explanation of the VBPro program and frame mapping may be found in the text *Progress in Communication Sciences* in the chapter "Frame Mapping: A Quantitative Method for Investigating Issues in the Public Sphere" (Miller and Riechert, 2001).

The initial step in defining the research was to establish the policy issue; in this case, how the media frame voluntarily childless women, whether in positive, negative or neutral terms.

Stakeholders in this issue, as defined by the positions articulated in the selected research materials, included the following information as illustrated in Table 1.

Once the policy issue and stakeholders were defined, the search for resource materials was initiated.

The Associated Press (AP) news service was chosen for its wide distribution—to more than 15,000 newspapers and broadcast outlets—and its appeal to a broad-based demographic group (Knight Ridder Information, Inc., 1995, p. 23).

Since AP encompasses this extensive and varied spectrum, the service has the reputation of being consistently objective. The sample base of the articles was not exhaustive, as Lexis-Nexis places only a selected number of AP articles online. Both AP and Lexis-Nexis representatives, when contacted, were unable to ascertain the total percentage of articles placed online at the time of this study.

The search was carried out using Lexis-Nexis Academic Universe's database through the University of Tennessee library access. The search terms included:

childless women	voluntarily childless	married couples
childless	childless by choice	married women without children
planning no family	childless people	married, childless couples
childfree	married, no kids	couples without children

An additional search was carried out using these terms:

birth control	feminism
family values	pro-family

These terms were used in order to establish the influence of the feminist and "family values" movement on the media framing of voluntarily childless women.

Online articles from AP containing the pertinent search terms were reviewed, beginning from 1977 (where online availability began) until 2000. This span of time was selected primarily to track the impact of the feminist movement (which was at its peak during the late 1970s) and the after-effects of the conservative Reagan years and the anti-feminist backlash on the phenomenon of voluntarily childless women.

The search yielded a total of 91 articles. The articles were carefully reviewed in order to define key terms based on the framing issues. A list of AP stories appears in Appendix A.

The majority of the articles were basic AP news stories; several featured public opinion surveys conducted by AP, including one on the phenomenon of voluntarily childless couples and a second on American attitudes towards family. A total of 35 percent, 32 out of a total of 91 articles dealt with the results of studies. Most of the articles dealt with specific events, including the announcement of legislation on same-sex marriages, reaction to the birth of the world's first "test-tube baby," a visit by the Pope to Africa, results of various health and sociological studies and controversy over a Republican administrator's public criticism of Bob Dole's childless marriage. The majority of the other articles contained general news and feature stories.

A review of the articles' content established six groups of stakeholders in policy issue of voluntarily childless women. The stakeholders and their positions are listed in Table 1. Although this content analysis did not use as resource material press releases from individual groups of stakeholders, the articulated positions of these groups are important when determining the social and cultural factors that influence media frames.

In order to prepare the data for analysis by VBPro, all articles were placed in an ASCII text file in chronological order. Each article was assigned a case number, designated by the pound sign and a number (e.g. #001, #002). Brackets ([ ]) were used to cordon off information which was not necessary for the search, such as headings and bylines. This procedure also allowed the preservation of this data for future reference, if needed. Ellipses were also eliminated in order to provide more efficiency for the program.

Code identifiers for time placement were also inserted into the text file in order to ascertain changes across time. An initial analysis of the data revealed themes that logically fell into two time periods, 1977 through 1989 and 1990 through 2000. As indicated by Faludi and Stearny in the literature review, and as demonstrated in many of the AP articles, there was a



*Table 1*  
*Defined Stakeholders*

<b>Group Name</b>	<b>Constituencies</b>	<b>Position</b>
Voluntarily childless	Primarily consists of married couples who do not want children	The voluntarily childless want freedom of choice: do not want to have to follow "traditional" roles; and are sensitive to social and cultural pressures to have children.
Infertile women	Consists of mostly married women who cannot conceive due to medical conditions	The infertile want public concern and support for their condition; most would like to see infertility treatments covered by insurance; strong affinity to and belief in parenthood.
Women with children	A group of primarily married mothers	Mothers want to continue the traditional validation and appreciation for their role; their main concern is for the well-being of children and societal support for families.
Political leaders	National, state and local elected officials	The majority of politicians uphold traditional family structure and offer public statements and policy support for parents with children.
Religious leaders	Ministers, priests, leaders of political-religious groups	A large percentage of this group want to affirm traditional family and patriarchal values. In many major religions (Catholic, Mormon, fundamentalist), motherhood is seen as a woman's primary role and large families are actively encouraged.
Media and advertising	Business executives, owners of advertising agencies, individual media outlets and groups, their employees	Advertising and media find it beneficial to appeal to women primarily in their roles as wives and mothers; as the U.S. is a consumer-based economy, a boon is created through purchase of products for families.

strong trend toward pronatalist themes at the beginning of the 1990s as well as significant content about the voluntarily childless and the "childfree movement."

Codes for this section were designated by a dollar sign (e.g. \$T1, \$T2) in order to allow VBPro to code for differentials in time periods. The resulting two sections encompassed 46 articles in the first group and 45 articles in the second; fortunately, almost two even groups.

The software was also programmed to ignore capital letters during the search and plurals and possessives were listed separately from their original words (i.e. woman, women's, women).

The text file was then formatted in the VBPro program and was saved as a MSDOS file in the program's directory. The formatted file was then analyzed by VBPro to provide both an alphabetized and frequency of terms list. The VBPro Alphabetizer and Rank Sorter are used to produce computer files that list words and their frequencies in alphabetical order and ranked in descending order by frequency. The high-frequency words that appear to be relevant are then selected for additional analysis (Miller, 1997).

On the alphabetized list, terms such as "the" " in" and "an" were discarded because they did not establish any relevant connection to the framing issues.

These two files were compared to determine the frequency of terms. The terms were then reviewed by the author to determine how they were used within the context of the articles. The list of 116 key terms were created by selecting words that were both frequent within the articles and by establishing their relevancy to the policy issue. Several choices, such as "motherhood," "pregnancy" and "family" were obvious choices for the subject matter.

These words were then VBPro coded for frequency of occurrence within each article, and the coded output was submitted to the VBMap program. The VBMap-generated file was submitted to SPSS for hierarchical cluster analysis, specifying a dendrogram output.

Jain and Dubes describe cluster analysis as a process that "organizes data by abstracting underlying structure either as a grouping of individuals or as a hierarchy of groups. The representation can then be investigated to see if the data group according to preconceived ideas or to suggest new experiments" (Jain and Dubes, 1998, p. xiii). A dendrogram is a tree-type map plot that illustrates how similar objects cluster together at various levels. This allows the researcher to interpret how the objects of interest relate in similarity and dissimilarity to one another (Riechert, 1996). The dendrograms specifying the clusters are shown in Figures 1, 2, 3 and 4. In order to ascertain significant changes across time, the remaining five cluster terms were compiled into a second structured search list with the cluster terms separated into specific identified sections. The data file was analyzed via the time code identifiers (\$T1 and \$T2) and a map was created showing the positions of the five cluster terms relative to the time-code identifiers.

## CHAPTER IV.

### RESULTS

After analysis through both the VBPro Alphabetizer and Rank Sorter, two computer files were created establishing both an alphabetical list of terms and a listing by frequency of appearance within the articles. The author then determined, through analysis of the AP stories, how the frequent terms were used within the context of the articles. A list of 116 key terms was established by the criteria of their frequency of appearance and their relevancy to the policy issue. Several terms, such as "childless," "motherhood" and "family" were obvious choices for the topic. The list of key terms and frequencies of occurrence is shown in Table 2.

These terms were then compiled in a search list, with synonyms coded as one term, such as "women," "woman," and "woman's." Additionally, some terms were grouped together such as breast\_cancer and cultural\_norms. Several terms with limited frequencies were discarded, including the terms "childfree" and "barren," which had only one occurrence each. The low frequency of these terms, although topically significant, precluded any serious relevance to the framing themes.

The terms were then submitted to the VBPro Coder to indicate the count of the terms and the identified codes in each story. The coder creates a file containing columns of data in ASCII format that can be read by SPSS.

The coded file was then processed by the VBPro Map program, which constructs a cosine coefficient matrix that indicates the degree to which the terms co-occur. After that process, the mapper extracts the eigenvectors from the matrix. The output is provided in two files, one with

Table 2  
Key Terms and Frequencies of Occurance

Term	Plurals/Possessives	Frequency
Abortion		9
Abuse	Abused	5
Acceptable	Acceptance, accepted, accepting	10
Achieve	Achievement, achieving	4
Adjusted	Adjustable, adjusting, adjustment, adjustments	9
Adopt	Adopted, adopting, adoption, adoptive	45
Adult	Adulthood, adults	24
Affluent		7
Approval	Approve, approved	6
Baby	Babies, baby's	108
Baby-boom	Baby-boomers, boomer, boomers	18
Behavior	Behavioral	8
Birth	Births, birthing, childbirth, childbearers, childbearing, childbirths	175
Bitter	Bitterness, bitterly	2
Breast	Breasts, breast_feeding, breast_cancer	60
Cancer	Cancers	68
Career	Carrers, career_driven, career_oriented	46
Child	Child's, children, children's	564
Childless		152
Choice	Choices, choose, chooses, choosing	48
Conflict	Conflicts	5
Consequence	Consequences	3
Conservative	Conservatives	3
Consumer	Consumers	10
Contraception	Contraceptive, contraceptives	12
Controversial	Controversy	2
Corporate	Corporation, corporations	13
Couples	Couples, couples'	165
Culture	Cultural, cultural_norms	5

*Table 2 Continued*  
*Key Terms and Frequencies of Occurrence*

<b>Term</b>	<b>Plurals/Possessives</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Delay	Delayed, delaying	18
Demographer	Demographers, demographic, demographics	20
Different		12
Dinks	Double_income_no_kids, dink	14
Disease	Diseases	24
Divorce	Divorced, divorcees, divorces	53
Economic	Economics	14
Educated	Education, educational, educations	35
Elderly		9
Emotional	Emotionally	10
Employed	Employee, employees, employer, employers, employment	31
Empty	Emptiness	5
Equal	Equally, equals	7
Environment	Environmental, environments	4
Exclude	Excluded, excluding, exclusion	7
Expectations		6
Family	Families, family's	280
Father	Father's, fathers	16
Female	Females, femininity	25
Feminist	Feminism, femininty	3
Fertile	Fertility	50
Finance	Finances, financial, financially	19
Freedom		1
Fulfill	Fulfilled, fulfillment	6
Fundamentalist	Fundamentalists	4
Grandparent	Grandparents, grandparenting	7
Happy	Happier, happiest	13
Health	Healthier, healthiest	53
Heterosexual		3
Hormones	Hormonal, hormone	5
Household	Households	73
Housework	Housecleaning, housekeeping	19
Husband	Husband's, husbands	47
Illegitimate	Illegitimacy	5
Income	Incomes	66

*Table 2 Continued*  
*Key Terms and Frequencies of Occurrence*

<b>Term</b>	<b>Plurals/Possessives</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Independent	Independence	7
Infertile	Infertility	34
Intelligent	Intelligence, intellectual	5
Isolation	Isolated	2
Job	Jobs	90
Kid	Kids	39
Liberal	Liberals	1
Life	Lifetime, lifetimes, lifespan, lifelong	92
Lifestyle	Lifestyles	18
Loneliness	Lonely, alone	14
Loss	Losses, lose	5
Marry	Marriage, marriages, married, marrying	252
Maternity	Maternal	8
Mature	Maturing, maturity	4
Men	Man, man's, men's	85
Mother	Mom, moms, mother's, motherhood, mothers	154
Neurotic		2
Nontraditional		2
Normal	Norm	12
Offspring		6
Overpopulation		2
Parents	Parental, parenthood, parenting, parents	116
Political	Politics	14
Populate	Populated, population, populations	50
Pregnancy	Pregnancies, pregnant	71
Pressure	Pressures	16
Professional	Professionally, professionals	21
Pronatalist		1
Regret	Regrets, regrettable	11
Relationship	Relationships	9
Religion	Religious	18
Reproduction	Reproductive	11
Responsibility	Responsibilities	7
Reward	Rewarding, rewards	6

*Table 2 Continued*  
*Key Terms and Frequencies of Occurrence*

<b>Term</b>	<b>Plurals/Possessives</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Roles		30
Sacrifice	Sacrificed, sacrifices	3
Satisfied	Satisfying, satisfaction, satisfactions	16
Selfish	Selfishness	4
Sex	Sexes, sexual, sexually	26
Single	Singles	78
Social	Societal, societies, society, society's	99
Spouse	Spouse's, spouses	14
Stereotype	Stereotypes, stereotypical	3
Stress	Stressed, stressful	11
Success	Successful, successfully	12
Superwomen	Superwomen	2
Traditional		26
Value	Values, valuing	16
Wealth	Wealthier, wealthy	4
White	Whites, Caucasian	34
Wife	Wife's, wives	47
Women	Woman's, women, women's	667
Work	Workaholic, worked, worker, workers, workforce, working, workplace, works	123
Yuppie	Yuppies	7

descriptive information for interpretation and the other designed as input for subsequent analysis (Miller, 1997).

The output file was subsequently analyzed in SPSS. SPSS used an agglomerative clustering algorithm that made multiple passes through the data and joined the closest pair of terms with each pass until all were joined in a single cluster. The results of the cluster analysis were displayed in a dendrogram map, as shown in Figures 1-4. Eight clusters emerged from the dendrogram.

The cluster titles were determined by the frequency of occurrence of particular terms within a cluster as well as their context in the AP stories. The majority of the cluster "themes" were easily identifiable, particularly in the first five clusters.



After the initial determination of the cluster theme was completed, the cluster themes were further solidified by reviewing the first ten articles in the analyzed set with the greatest number of term occurrences.

VBPro was then used to analyze the number and content of the selected articles as they related to the cluster themes.

### Cluster Analysis: Religious Fundamentalists

In the first cluster frame, designated Religious Fundamentalists, terms with a strong showing included value, sex, religion, pronatalist and political. This cluster, as illustrated in Table 3, was easily identifiable, as terms that appeared in this group encompassed words associated with traditional religious, political, social and cultural attitudes towards women's roles.

The majority of the articles in the Religious Fundamentalists Cluster, as illustrated in Table 4, were dated from 1992 to 1996, with the exception of four—one of which was dated 1978, and the others that were dated in the early to mid-1980s. Four of the top ten articles (40 percent) were related to news events, three (30 percent) were reporting on the results of various studies, two were hard news stories and one featured the results of a survey. Most of the material represented by articles in this group strongly encompassed the themes of support for nuclear families, "family values" in politics and criticism from religious leaders about nontraditional lifestyles.

The article in this cluster with the highest rate of framing terms featured the results of a study on religion and childlessness that took place in 1992. The study found that less than 2 percent of fundamentalist and Roman Catholic respondents reported having no desire to have children; in contrast, about 6 percent of husbands and wives with no religious affiliations reported being voluntarily childless. The tie between traditional religious pronatalism was emphasized by

\*\*\*\*\* H I E R A R C H I C A L C L U S T E R A N A L Y S I S \*\*\*\*\*

Dendrogram using Average Linkage (Between Groups)

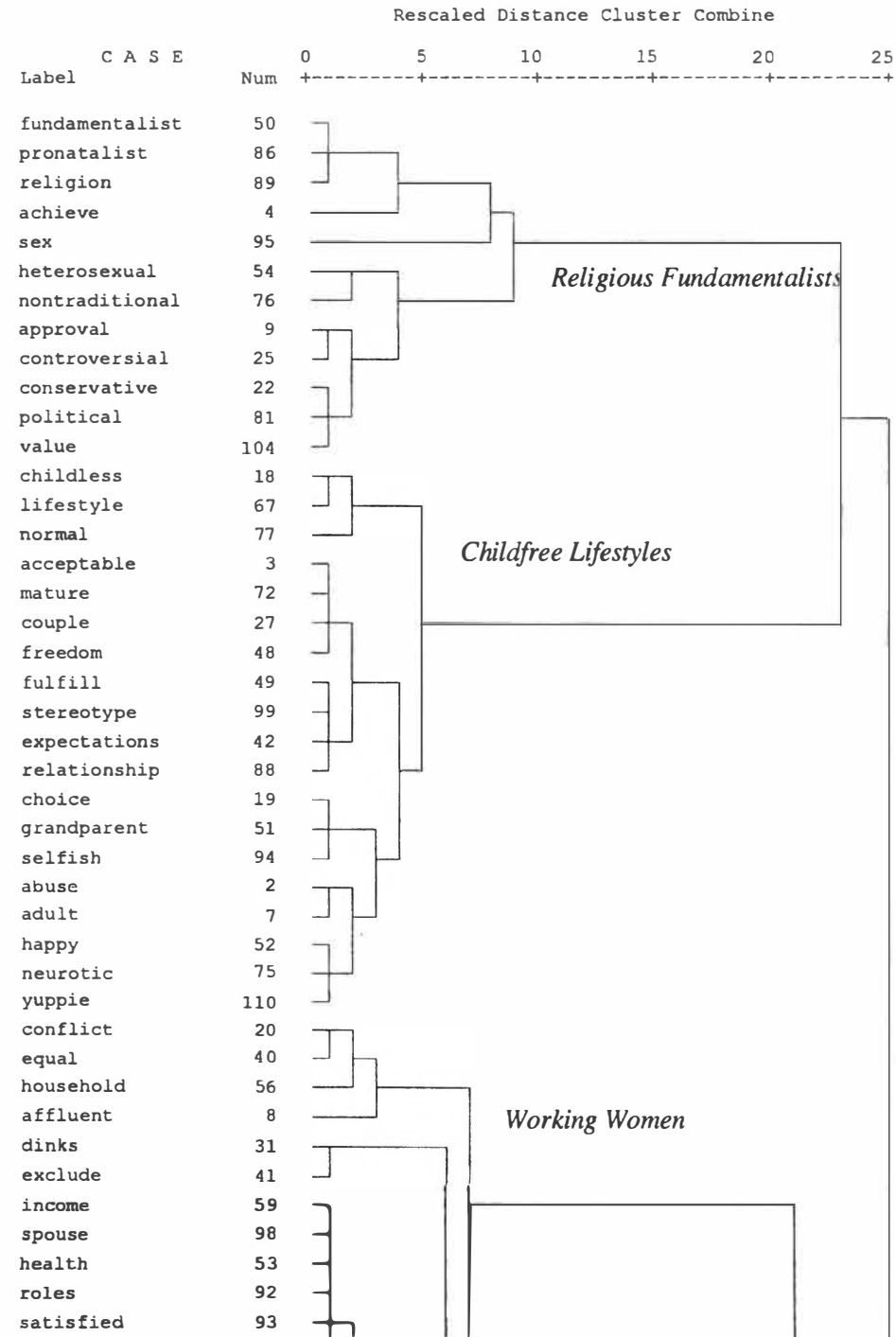


Figure 1, Dendrogram Map, Page 1

\* \* \* \* \* H I E R A R C H I C A L C L U S T E R A N A L Y S I S \* \* \* \* \*

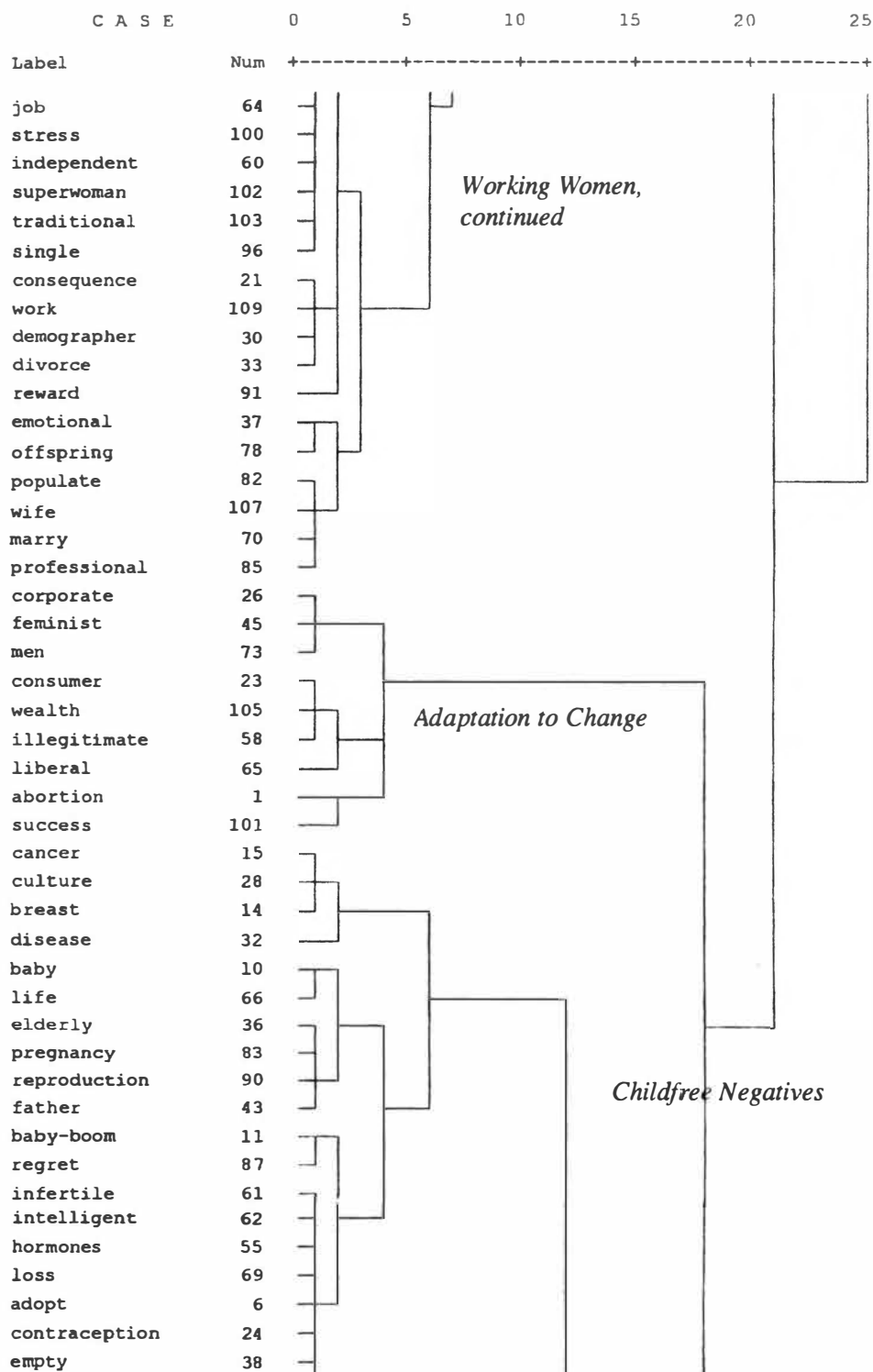


Figure 2, Dendrogram Map, Page 2

\*\*\*\*\* H I E R A R C H I C A L C L U S T E R A N A L Y S I S \*\*\*\*\*

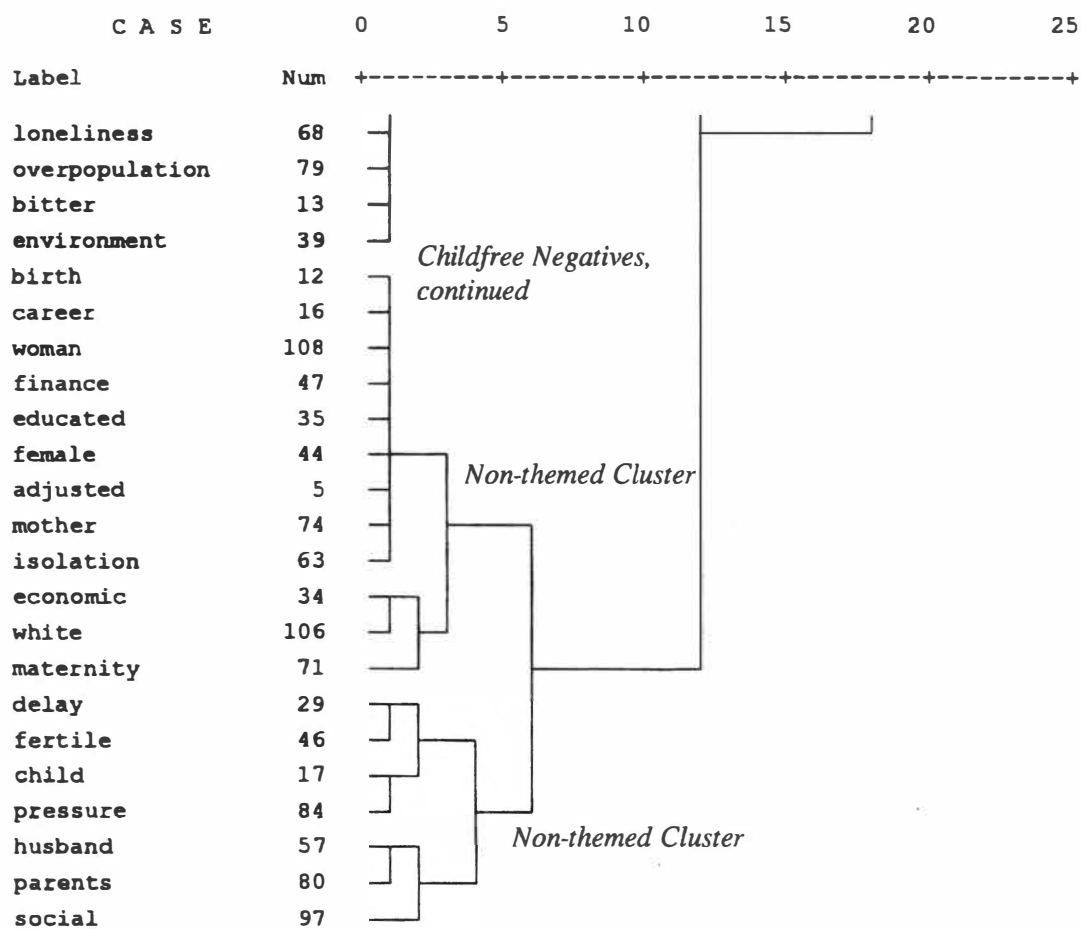


Figure 3, Dendrogram Map, Page 3



*Table 3*  
*Term Cluster 1: Religious Fundamentalists*

<b>Designation</b>	<b>Terms</b>	<b>Frequency of Occurrence</b>
Cluster 1:  Religious Fundamentalists	Value	104
	Sex	95
	Religion	89
	Pronatalist	86
	Political	81
	Nontraditional	76
	Heterosexual	54
	Fundamentalist	50
	Controversial	25
	Conservative	22
	Approval	9

the results. Researchers concluded that religious values come together to discourage couples from choosing to be childless.

The attitudes of conservative, traditionally religious groups and leaders were also the focus in several of the articles. In the cluster's earliest dated article (1978), the arrival of the world's first test-tube baby, Louise Brown, was examined both on the basis of reproductive technology and on a social and ethical level. Although Roman Catholic clergy primarily denounced this "immoral" artificial insemination, the response from other major religious officials, as portrayed in the article, was surprisingly mild. The inclusion of the article on the Brown birth is significant, as it represents the beginning of the "infertility epidemic" articles and also was the marked the beginning of media attention to radical medical treatments for infertile couples. In another article that illustrates the religious, pronatalist viewpoint, Pope John Paul II, on a 1982 visit to Africa, used the occasion to denounce the "modern enemies of the family, the disturbing degradation of some fundamental values--divorce, contraception and abortion" (Mulligan, 1982).

Table 4  
Cluster 1: Religious Fundamentalists Articles

Publication Date	Frequency of Terms	Topic	Story Type
09/25/92	18	The attitudes of Christian fundamentalists, Catholics and Mormons to childbearing.	Study
07/09/92	12	"Family values" in political campaigns	News
09/10/96	8	Same-sex marriage legislation, criticism of childless marriages	Event
03/08/99	5	Community pool owner accused of discriminating against gays, childless couples	News
05/23/80	3	Decline in nuclear families, decrease in non-traditional homes	Study
07/29/78	3	Religious leaders react to "test-tube" baby	Event
09/25/85	3	Survey results - families are still strong	Survey
02/13/82	3	Pope visits Africa, publicly denounces contraception and abortion	Event
08/24/92	3	America's tax policies favor traditional families	Study
05/23/96	3	Republican state administrator criticizes Bob Dole's childless marriage	Event

Some conservatives in the articles also equated voluntarily childless marriages with legal same-sex unions. In an article on the state of Hawaii's legal battle to ban same-sex unions, an attorney, defending the right of gay couples to marry, argued "The state is giving rights to married couples without children, yet denies these protections to same-sex couples with children" (Dunford, 1996). Another AP story featured the political furor surrounding remarks made on a talk radio show by Dan Miller, chairman of the Illinois Commerce Commission, about Bob Dole's childless marriage. Miller claimed that, if one or the other of the Doles couldn't have children for physical reasons, they should not have been allowed to marry under the same rules that apply to same-sex marriages. At the time, in 1996, Dole was a co-sponsor of a Senate bill that would outlaw same-sex marriages. And another article featured public reaction when a city swimming pool's fee system was denounced as discriminatory towards nontraditional

"families"—including a gay pair, who made the discrimination charge, and childless married couples. The event sparked public debate in the community about exactly "what constitutes a family."

Political ties to "family values" were discussed in several of the articles. One study of political dividing lines that separate voter attitudes found that wide differences in beliefs separated families with children from single Americans and childless couples. According to the AP account, pollsters who conducted the survey were surprised to find such a large gap, with parents showing much more conservative attitudes than the childless spouses. The article also suggested strong support from voters for then-vice-president Dan Quayle's "family values" theme and suggested that the 1992 campaign would open a "values gap."

Three of the articles discussed the changing social structure of families; one 1980 story declared that a study had shown that "Nuclear Families are Fading." This early research suggested that nontraditional households would proliferate and commented that political leaders were not forming an informed and sensitive family policy, primarily by holding on to the traditional idea of what a family should be, expressing disapproval of modern attitudes and exhibiting a lack of understanding about social change. However, a second 1985 article trumpeted the results of a survey that proclaimed "The disintegration of the American family is a myth," and suggested that families were closer than ever, according to a study by a women's magazine. The story went on to state that a growing number of Americans accepted nontraditional families, including couples who are childless by choice. A report attributed to the Population Reference Bureau, in an AP article published in 1992, suggested that "pro-family" policies were shortsighted and would probably weaken, rather than strengthen, family ties. The report also concluded that, despite pressure from the political right and religious leaders, it was unlikely that families would return to the stereotype of a breadwinner father and a stay-at-home mother.



Table 5  
Term Cluster 2: Childfree Lifestyles

Designation	Terms	Frequency of Occurrence
Cluster 2: Childfree Lifestyles	Yuppie	110
	Stereotype	99
	Selfish	94
	Relationship	88
	Normal	77
	Neurotic	75
	Mature	77
	Lifestyle	67
	Happy	52
	Grandparent	51
	Fulfill	49
	Freedom	48
	Expectations	42
	Couple	27
	Choice	19
	Childless	18
	Adult	7
	Acceptable	3
	Abuse	2

Cluster Analysis: Childfree Lifestyles

The second frame, Childfree Lifestyles, was also easily established. As illustrated in Table 5, terms such as yuppie, stereotype, selfish, relationship and lifestyle were the most evident in the dendrogram. This cluster included terms that appeared to reflect primarily positive messages about women and couples who have chosen not to have children and the growing acceptance of the childfree lifestyle in America.

The Childfree Lifestyles cluster featured four of the top ten articles (40 percent) reporting the results of a study, three articles (30 percent) designated as feature stories, two survey articles and one news story.

Table 6  
Cluster 2: Childfree Lifestyles Articles

Publication Date	Frequency of Terms	Topic	Story Type
03/16/91	53	Positive interview with childless by choice couples and individuals	Feature
03/16/91	29	AP poll on family, marriages	Survey
03/22/91	21	Profiles of childless women, some through infertility, others voluntary	Feature
09/25/85	20	Survey on American attitudes towards family and social changes	Survey
12/15/86	17	Census study showing increase in both families with children and childless couples	Study
12/16/96	13	America shows fewer non-family households	Study
03/08/99	12	Community pool owner accused of discriminating against gays, childless couples	News
10/24/83	12	Study on family changes shows more acceptance of childless marriages	Study
08/24/92	3	America's tax policies favor traditional families	Study
08/25/92	11	Changes in the American family structure	Feature

In the Childfree Lifestyles cluster, as shown in Table 6, the article with the highest frequency of terms was a 1991 interview with several couples that had chosen the childfree lifestyle. The article explained the term "DINKS" (which stands for dual income, no kids; the term is the married version of "YUPPIE" that some associate with a self-indulgent, self-centered lifestyle). The majority of the couples who are interviewed in the article express no regrets over their decision. The article also implied that not meeting stereotypical expectations, rather than the actual fact of not having children, is often what creates difficulties in the lives of the voluntarily childless, particularly women. Most of the articles that featured childless by choice couples and acceptance of voluntary childlessness as a lifestyle choice appeared during the early 1990s, including an AP telephone poll from 1991 which randomly sampled 1,004 adults. Almost all of

the responses were positive—in reference to describing childless adults. 76 percent said the word "selfish" did not apply; 89 percent said "unloving" did not fit and 80 percent said the phrase "not blessed by God" did not describe childless couples well. The poll did show some variance: most respondents (60 percent) said that most married couples would be happier if they had children.

An extensive 1992 article featured interviews with baby-boomer women who were childless either by choice or through infertility; although some expressed regrets, many were satisfied with the lifestyle. Again, the perceptions of the voluntarily childless by others was a recurring theme; most of the women regretted the social and family difficulties that they faced after going public with their decision.

Although many of the articles indicated that the voluntarily childless continue to face social disapproval, all four stories featuring surveys with questions about childfree couples found increasing social tolerance of the lifestyle. And a 1986 article that focused on a study about population increases showed, although married couples with children grew in numbers during the period, the number of childless married couples also increased from 19.1 million in 1970 to 24.1 million in 1980 to 26.3 million in 1986. Another article described a study predicting that as many as 29 percent of white women born during the 1950s would remain childless.

The "wealthy yuppie" stereotype of the voluntarily childless, however, was reinforced in a 1983 article about housing on the Southern California coast. The story featured interviews with locals who complained that two-income, childless couples who moved into the community were inflating housing and cost-of-living prices. Communities such as Marina del Rey, a newspaper publisher commented, "...Was a community but still had no children" (Fox, 1983).

Four articles in the cluster were shared with the first cluster, including the article regarding ties between religion and pronatalism; the story about the Hawaiian legal battle over same-sex marriages; studies on why tax policies favor traditional families; and a survey on American attitudes towards changes in family structure. The probable reason for these shared

articles is that they reflect the continuing religious and cultural disapproval and social isolation that the voluntarily childless face, regardless of their satisfaction with their lifestyle choices.

### Cluster Analysis: Working Women

The third framing cluster, Working Women, illustrated in Table 8, was defined by a broad array of terms including work, wife, traditional, superwoman, spouse and reward. This cluster, shown in Table 7, overwhelmingly included terms that encompassed the entry of women into the workforce and the growing financial and social clout wielded by working women.

In the Working Women cluster, at least six articles in the top ten (60 percent) featured surveys on working women and reported that employed women who were married and had children predominantly were healthier and happier than other women. Two articles were feature stories, and the cluster also included one news story and one survey. The article which showed the greatest preponderance of cluster terms was a 1985 study that stated, "Contrary to popular belief, the triple roles of job, spouse and mother are linked with good health" (Wellburn, 1985). The study compared women who were married and mothers, women who were married and childless and single women without children. Another study, published in 1992, provided evidence that working women who were married with families had a "buffer" area that provided protection from job-related stresses. A popular women's magazine survey in 1996 also touted multiple roles for women, adding that these women's lives offered more sources of fulfillment. Another 1992 Canadian research story showed that married, professional women with children scored highest on psychological tests that measured well-being, personal and professional satisfaction and self-esteem.

The financial boon created by women entering the workplace was another theme related to this cluster. A 1998 Census Bureau study showed that the contribution of America's working

Table 7  
Term Cluster 3: Working Women

Designation	Terms	Occurrences
Cluster 3: Working Women	Work	109
	Wife	107
	Traditional	103
	Superwoman	102
	Stress	100
	Spouse	98
	Single	96
	Satisfied	93
	Roles	92
	Reward	91
	Professional	85
	Populate	82
	Offspring	78
	Marry	70
	Job	64
	Independent	60
	Income	59
	Household	56
	Health	53
	Exclude	41
	Equal	40
	Emotional	37
	Divorce	33
	Dinks	31
	Demographer	30
	Consequence	21
	Conflict	20
	Affluent	8

Table 8  
Cluster 3: Working Women Articles

Publication Date	Frequency of Terms	Topic	Story Type
02/20/85	77	Survey shows working married women with children are the happiest	Survey
09/01/98	61	Women's entry into the workforce increases household income	Study
04/06/92	40	Women with multiple roles have more life satisfaction	Study
03/08/96	38	Study shows women thrive on hectic lifestyles	Study
11/21/92	37	Professional women with families are least depressed	Study
10/24/83	36	Families are still "alive and well" as women continue working	Study
02/13/82	35	Those who wait until later years to marry have better unions	Study
04/02/83	33	Families forced out by wealthy childless in expensive California community	News
07/10/77	33	Czech government pays moms to stay home with kids	Feature
08/08/94	33	Author takes on temporary roles, including housewife and mom	Feature

wives and mothers accounted for the bulk of the increase in household income during the decades of the 1980s and 1990s. A 1988 study showed that the share of women returning to work, or actively seeking jobs within a year after arrival of a baby climbed to 50.8 percent that year; labor force participation of new mothers with college degrees reached 63 percent.

A 1983 study predicted that working women would remain the norm, adding, "...More people will delay marriage and most wives will decide to juggle home care with a job, postponing childbearing and limiting themselves to one or two children" (Schmid, 1983). A Census Bureau study from 1982 confirms the trend towards delayed marriage, and confirms that those who marry

later in life tend to have longer-lasting marriages. Population experts began seeing a trend as baby-boomers, who had delayed marriage and families, began settling down in the mid-to-late 1980s; a 1986 study stated that "the traditional family is making a comeback." A 1996 story backed up this statistic, showing that families made up 70 percent of America's 98.9 million households in 1995.

The influence of women's participation in the workplace on the division of household chores also was a feature in one article, reporting the results of yet another study: although men have slowly begun contributing to the workload, women still do two hours of housework for every one hour performed by a man. The story goes on to state that this is an improvement from the 3-to-1 share in 1975 and the 6-to-1 share in 1965.

Articles on controversial issues regarding women in the workplace included a discussion with author and career activist Felice Schwartz on the "mommy track," a phenomenon which posits that there are two "tracks" in the workplace--a "fast track" for women without children and a slower, dead-end route for those women who want families.

Although a 1992 study stated that only one in five married couples with children fit the stereotype of a working father and a stay-at-home mother, political efforts to reinstate the traditional family structure still continue, as reported by AP. A story published in 1977 outlined how the Czechoslovakian government attempted to improve fertility rates by paying women to stay at home with their children. Another article featured attempts by the Utah state legislature to offer stay-at-home mothers a \$100 per year tax credit.

Two articles also discussed the phenomenon of DINKS, an offshoot of two-income families and increasing household wealth and purchasing power.

The only article shared between this cluster and the Religious Fundamentalist cluster included the study about the "fading nuclear family" published in the 1980s; part of the discussion of changing family structure as discussed in this article involved the influence of

working wives. There were several shared articles with cluster number two, Childfree Lifestyles, in particular studies showing the influence of careers on the patterns of women's lives.

The top ten articles in this cluster consisted of six feature articles (60 percent), three studies (30 percent) and one article featuring the results of a survey.

#### Cluster Analysis: Adaptation to Change

Adaptation to Change, the fourth cluster, reflected the way that both culture and individuals have responded to the social changes of the last decade. As illustrated in Table 9, terms associated with this frame include success, liberal and wealth.

Table 10 illustrates that the article that contained the most cluster terms in the Adaptation to Change Cluster was one that also appeared in the previous Working Women cluster: an interview with Felice Schwartz, whose controversial writings coined the phrase "mommy track." In the context of the cultural adaptation cluster, the content of this article would back up Schwartz's claim that companies must adapt to actively cultivate and promote women in order to achieve long-term financial success, since there are more female college graduates who seek employment and fewer qualified male candidates.

The story sources also noted that corporations must also be adaptable to meet the needs of a different set of employees. Although most employers view workers as individuals with traditional families, a 1997 article outlines the growing number of childless employees; at the time of the article's publication, more than 60 percent of the work force did not have full or partial guardianship of children under 18.

The article with the second greatest number of terms also appeared in the Working Women Cluster and outlined the differences in division of household chores between men and



Table 9

Term Cluster 4: *Adaptation to Change*

Designation	Terms	Occurrences
Cluster 4: Adaptation to Change	Wealth	105
	Success	101
	Men	73
	Illegitimate	58
	Liberal	65
	Feminist	45
	Corporate	26
	Consumer	23
	Abortion	1

women, showing how the influx of women into the workplace has changed this balance. The 1988 article, with the headline "Men Do More Housework, But Still Trail Women" suggests that the adaptability to cultural changes in the domestic sphere has been slow.

The cultural and sociological changes brought about by working women have also affected marketing and advertising; a 1989 article discusses ways in which today's automobile marketers are having to rethink their strategies. Thirty years ago, market researchers could categorize buyers by age and income only, since individuals in their 30s and 40s were generally married, had kids and aspired to the same lifestyles. Today's mix of blended families, long-term singles and married couples without children provides a great deal more challenge.

Personal adaptability was illustrated in articles on two very different women: the first, Georgette Mosbacher, who overcame childhood poverty and became a wealthy, visible force in the Republican Party through a childless marriage to a powerful man; and the second was a feature on Tillie Olsen, a black female writer who also rose from poverty to become an acclaimed author, but took out a number of years from her writing career to raise a family. Both women overcame the odds against sex, race, economic class and culture to achieve success, but in very different ways.

Table 10  
Cluster 4: Adaptation to Change Articles

Publication Date	Frequency of Terms	Topic	Story Type
06/15/93	20	Careerist Felice Schwartz discusses the "mommy track"	Feature
11/30/88	12	Survey shows women still do most of housework	Study
08/10/89	8	Automobile marketers have to change strategy for new American family	Feature
10/06/97	6	Resentment between childless and parents in the workplace	Feature
10/19/78	6	Women born 1905-1909 had fewer children, lack care in old age	Feature
08/09/89	6	Study shows children help male professors' career, hurt female professors	Study
07/10/99	6	Profile of wealthy, childless female political activist	Feature
05/06/80	5	Black female author puts writing on hold to raise family	Feature
04/17/79	5	Study shows women spending less time on housework and child care	Study
03/31/89	5	Survey: many women would have a child without a partner	Survey

Other than the first two articles, this cluster had no stories in common with the other clusters. Seven of the top ten articles in this cluster (70 percent) consisted of reports on study results, two of the articles were features; the cluster also contained one news story.

#### Cluster Analysis: Childfree Negatives

In Cluster 5, Childfree Negatives, illustrative terms included overpopulation, reproduction, regret, loss, loneliness and pregnancy. This cluster, shown in Table 11, was the mirror image of cluster number two, Childfree Lifestyle, with prominent themes indicative of the dark side of remaining childless: health problems, loneliness and regret.

Initial analysis of the dendrogram indicated that Cluster 5 potentially could be split into two clusters; however, upon closer examination of the articles and terms, the similarity of themes posited that the two could be combined for a stronger and more effective defining frame. Thus, both Cluster 5 and 6 were combined into Cluster 5.

The majority of the articles in this cluster, as illustrated in Table 12, were dated during the decade of the 1990s; one article was dated 2000, and two significant articles were from an earlier decade. The first was the "test-tube" baby article, dated 1978, and the second was a profile of a surrogate mother, dated 1978. Both of these articles were closely tied to one of the strong themes apparent in this cluster, that of reproductive technology. Other articles that featured content related to this topic included a story on the medical advances behind egg donor pregnancies and an article that discussed the "infertility epidemic." The latter, according to resources quoted in the article, in fact never did exist, but several factors did contribute to the perception of this "problem." Firstly, as a large number of baby-boomer women delayed pregnancy, a significant group of older women were attempting to conceive and were facing fertility difficulties. Although the percentage of those with fertility problems did not change, the large numbers in this group added to the perception that there was a larger number of women afflicted. Additionally, infertility treatments were just coming onto the public's radar through extensive media coverage.

Several of the articles dealing with infertility contained "warnings" from women who delayed pregnancy and suffered the consequences. In the story on egg donors, one woman commented, "We have to tell our children, know that if you choose to postpone pregnancy, you may face adversity" (Dreyfous, 1990). Another story featured interviews with childless boomer women, many of whom expressed regrets about waiting to have children and their devastation over dealing with infertility.

Table 11  
Term Cluster 5: Childfree Negatives

Designation	Terms	Occurrences
Cluster 5: Childfree Negatives	Reproduction	90
	Regret	87
	Pregnancy	83
	Overpopulation	79
	Loss	69
	Loneliness	68
	Life	66
	Intelligent	62
	Infertile	61
	Hormones	55
	Father	43
	Environment	39
	Empty	38
	Elderly	36
	Disease	32
	Culture	28
	Contraception	24
	Cancer	15
	Breast	14
	Bitter	13
	Baby-boom	11
	Baby	10
	Adopt	6

Table 12  
Cluster 5: Childfree Negatives

Publication Date	Frequency of Terms	Topic	Story Type
01/13/94	42	Breast cancer tie-in to childlessness	Study
09/16/90	36	Dangers in delayed childbearing, childlessness	Study
07/07/94	36	Women without children at greater risk for breast cancer	Study
07/06/94	35	Breast cancer study finds childless women may be at risk	Study
03/22/92	24	Profiles of childfree women	Feature
08/31/95	23	Study shows anti-cancer benefit of pregnancy	Study
05/05/97	20	Study on breast cancer risk factors	Study
05/25/95	17	Study on birth statistics, older mothers	Study
12/09/00	16	Woman with uterine cancer becomes mother	Feature
10/27/90	16	Story on egg donor pregnancy, dangers of delayed childbearing	News

Reproductive technology was also tied into a second theme in the articles, which might be titled "sacrifice anything to be a mother." Several articles, including ones on the test-tube baby, egg donor pregnancies, surrogate mothers and pregnancy at an older age featured discussions with women who were relentless in their pursuit of motherhood. One laudatory article featured a story on a childless woman who adopted two unwanted children, one of whom was severely handicapped. The victim of uterine cancer, the subject of the article was quoted as saying that she "could not have survived without children." An article that featured a survey on American attitudes towards adoption received the response that, although many are wary of some of the negative consequences of adoption, half of the survey respondents believe that adoption is better than being childless.

As a side note to the tie-in of reproductive technology, an article that featured a 1992 Worldwatch Institute study noted that millions of the world's women are being coerced into having children they don't want, and the number is growing. The researchers made note of the fact that access to safe abortions and advanced methods of contraception are becoming increasingly rare, and also made reference to the fact that more than 50 percent of all pregnancies in the U.S. are unintended.

The other strong theme in this cluster was that of health risks for women who do not have children. Five of the articles, one-third of the sample, dealt with medical studies that tied childlessness to breast cancer. In one study, a doctor suggested that women might consider the possibility that breast-feeding would reduce the risk of breast cancer and should make reproductive decisions accordingly. Another study conjectured that pregnancy offers a measure of protection against breast cancer, while three others also promoted the medical findings that breast-feeding protects women against breast cancer.

The cluster also featured an interview with Leslie Lafayette, who created the Childfree Network in 1991. Lafayette comments in the article that "I think there is a conspiracy in this country...to hide the realities of how hard child-rearing can be" (Grubb, 1992).

This cluster had few shared articles with the first four clusters: the test-tube baby story was also featured in cluster number one, Religious Fundamentalists. The relevance of that story in this particular cluster is primarily due to its alliance with the reproductive technology theme. The interviews with childless baby-boomer women also appeared in cluster number two, Childfree Lifestyles. Its inclusion with cluster number five is most likely due to the "regrets" and "loneliness" expressed by many of the women in the story, particularly those that suffered from infertility (infertility was also a key term used in this cluster with a relatively high number of appearances).

### Cluster Analysis: Unidentified Themes

The identifying terms for Cluster 6, as identified by Table 13, included woman, mother and isolation. This cluster was very similar to number three, Working Women, as several of these terms are closely identifiable with women in the workplace (i.e., educated, finance and career). Although many meaningful terms were clustered together, no obviously apparent theme emerged from this cluster.

Cluster 7, as illustrated in Table 14, was defined by these key terms: white, maternity, delay, pressure, parents and social. This group showed a number of terms similar to Cluster 6 (i.e., economic, social and work) and again, no clear theme emerged from the initial grouping of terms.

In the non-themed Cluster 6, articles included the story on the Czech government paying women to stay home with their children; the "mommy track" discussion with Felice Schwartz; the study with statistics showing more working women than ever before; and the study that stated that women who were married, had children and worked enjoyed greater life satisfaction.

Two of the articles in the cluster were shared with the Childfree Negatives cluster, including the profile of older mothers and the interview with childless boomer women.

Although the majority of articles in this cluster were shared, the three articles that were identified for this cluster alone did contain significant information. A 1989 article discussing a Census Bureau study stated that the majority of women who had a baby in 1988 were also in the work force. The study also noted the rise in childbearing among females over 30, which suggested that women were deliberately postponing childbearing to older ages in order to complete their educations and establish themselves in careers.

Table 13

Term Cluster 6: Unidentified Theme

Designation	Terms	Occurrences
Cluster 6: Unidentified Theme	Woman	108
	Mother	74
	Isolation	63
	Finance	47
	Female	44
	Educated	35
	Career	16
	Birth	12
	Adjusted	5

Table 14

Cluster 7: Unidentified Theme

Designation	Terms	Occurrences
Cluster 7: Unidentified Theme	White	106
	Social	97
	Pressure	84
	Parents	80
	Maternity	71
	Husband	57
	Fertile	46
	Economic	34
	Delay	29
	Child	17



A 1983 article related to this cluster only featured a Census Bureau study stating that women were planning on fewer children and gaining confidence in their ability to turn those plans into reality. The story also noted that women with jobs were much less likely to have children than those not working outside the home and that a substantially higher proportion of childless women were in the workforce.

A 1993 story also noted changes in childbearing patterns, concurring with the previous article that women were delaying having children. The study also found that the proportion of mothers with managerial or professional jobs increased from 3.1 percent in 1981 to 8.2 percent in 1992 and also confirmed a general increase in illegitimate births in the U.S. The study concluded that childlessness among women was also on the rise, with 10.2 percent of women ages 40 to 44 childless in 1976 and 15.7 percent among women of that age group childless in the 1992 Census Bureau study.

This cluster could have raised interesting points in the research if it were viewed as a reflection of how the workplace has changed women's childbearing patterns. However, given the number of articles shared with other clusters and the similarity in theme to the Working Women cluster, it was viewed as not statistically significant and was discarded.

Cluster 7 featured the article on the Czech government paying women to stay home, which it shared with the Working Women cluster. Three articles—one on attitudes towards adoption, one featuring older mothers and the interview with childless baby-boomers—were also shared with the Childfree Negatives cluster. Three were shared with the Childfree Positives group, including a profile of childfree couples, the discussion of baby-boomer women who have chosen to be childless (also in the Childfree Negatives group) and an article outlining social changes to the family during recent decades. This cluster also had two shared articles with the Religious Fundamentalists cluster; the article aligning same-sex marriages with childless unions, and the study which stated that the American family was "alive and well."

The three articles not shared with other clusters showed some similarity of theme. All three were dated in the 1980s; the stories also all featured negative attitudes towards the voluntarily childless.

The first article, a 1985 study, commented that, although women were postponing having children, most wanted to be parents eventually. The researchers also stated that "most Americans continue to value parenthood, believe that child-bearing should accompany marriage, and feel social pressure to have children. Only a few see childlessness as an advantage or expect to be childless by choice" (AP, 1985).

The second article was a 1981 story on "Non-Parents Day: A Celebration for the Childless," sponsored by the National Alliance for Optional Parenthood. The group's founder discussed the subtle discrimination against childless couples and said that the event dated back to 1972, when the organization was founded. The event was meant to raise awareness of individuals who chose to remain childless.

A 1980 article outlined how adults-only housing was hurting families with children, and featured government officials who criticized landlords and tenants for denying families acceptable and safe housing.

As in the case of Cluster 6, the number of shared articles with previous clusters and the lack of a pervasive theme negated this group as an important factor in the research. However, the cluster does include several articles relating to childfree topics, and could be categorized by negative social attitudes towards the voluntarily childless. The level of statistical significance would probably have been minimal, however, and this cluster was also eliminated.

### Time Code Analysis

After compiling the remaining five cluster terms into a second structured search list, with the cluster terms separated into specific identified sections, the data file was analyzed in VBPro using the time code identifiers (\$T1 and \$T2). Utilizing the eigenvectors output by VBPro, the clusters were physically mapped in a three-dimensional configuration, as shown in Figure 5.

Analysis of the clustering patterns in Figure 5 shows the Working Women and Childfree Lifestyles clusters falling in proximity to Time Code 1; while the Adaptation to Change and Religious Fundamentalist clusters were affiliated with Time Code 2, although Cluster 4, Adaptation to Change was closer to center than any of the other clusters. The cluster with the strongest time affiliation, however, was Cluster 5, the Childfree Negatives. This indicates a strong use of these terms by the articles during the period of 1990-2000, This backs up the theory that negative framing of the childfree occurred more frequently during this time period.

The coded file was then outputted for final data analysis by SPSS. As illustrated in Table 16, Descriptive Statistics, the Working Woman cluster theme had the strongest showing: the cluster terms appeared in 14 percent of the 91 sample articles. The Childfree Negatives cluster had the second strongest, with 7.6 percent of the articles; and the Childfree Positives cluster appeared in 6 percent of the articles, The other two clusters, Religious Fundamentalists and Adaptation to Change both showed much lower percentages, with 1.1 percent for the former and 1.6 percent for the latter.

However, the Independent Samples T-Test, as shown in Table 15, was used to test for significant differences for time periods One and Two and it showed statistically significant differences for the Religious Fundamentalists cluster (.0455) and the Childfree Negatives cluster (.000) at the .05 level. The other three clusters showed no statistically significance differences between time periods.

In viewing the changes in the sample data over time, utilizing the two time code indicators, additional significant data occurred. As illustrated in Table 16, both the Religious Fundamentalist and the Childfree Negatives showed marked increases in appearance during Time 2. The Childfree Negatives terms appeared on average in 11 words per story in articles for this time designation. The Religious Fundamentalist cluster terms also made a notable increase in appearance, with 1.5 words per story on average in articles for Time 2, up from .5 in Time 1. Although the Childfree Lifestyles term cluster appeared to gain appearances, the cluster was not statistically significant.

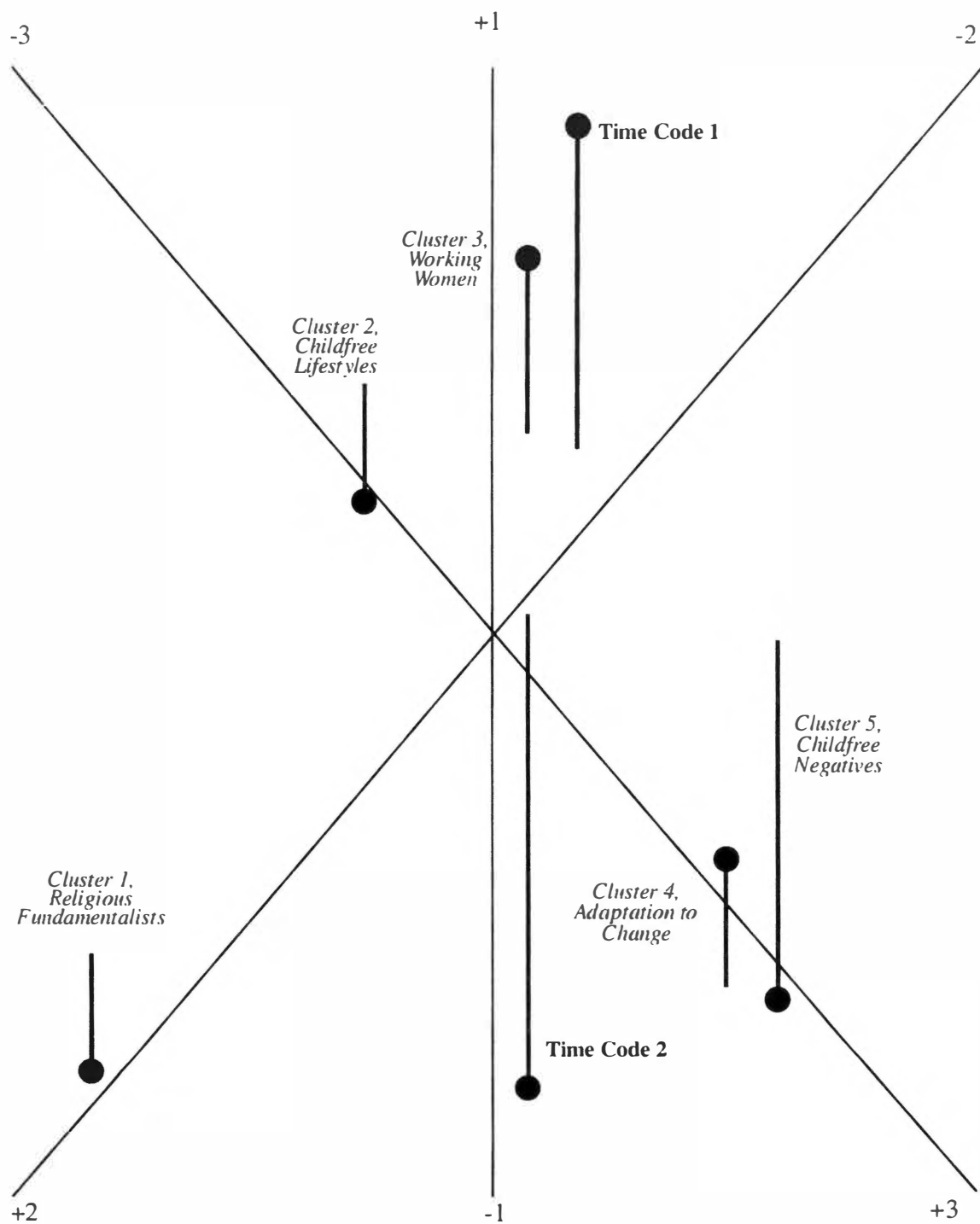


Figure 5, Cluster Map

Table 15

Term Frequencies - Total Sample N=91

Term Cluster Name	Average Frequency per Article	Percentage Frequency
Religious Fundamentalist	1.0440	1.1%
Childfree Positives	5.5055	6.0%
Working Women	12.6923	14%
Adaptation to Change	1.6923	1.8%
Childfree Negatives	6.9011	7.6%

Table 16

Independent Samples T-Test - N=91

Term Cluster Name	Overall Mean	Significance Level	Time Codes	Number in Sample	Time Averages
Religious Fundamentalist	1.0440	.0455*	T1	46	.5870*
			T2	45	1.5111*
Childfree Positives	5.5055	.0695	T1	46	4.3913
			T2	45	6.6444
Working Women	12.6923	.4555	T1	46	12.8478
			T2	45	12.5333
Adaptation to Change	1.6923	.4365	T1	46	1.7391
			T2	45	1.6444
Childfree Negatives	6.9011	.000*	T1	46	2.8913*
			T2	45	11.0000*

\*Statistically significant

## **CHAPTER V.**

### **DISCUSSION**

The primary research question posed by this study was "How do the media frame voluntarily childless women?" The obvious follow-up to that first question would be "Do the media frame voluntarily childless women in positive or negative ways?"

During the initial analysis of the articles, it appeared that, during the first time period (1977-1990), the feminist movement was still of relative importance, and the themes of working women and expanding female roles all received significant and mostly positive attention. It is also important to note, however, that articles in this time frame pointed to issues and events that would be influential on the news media's framing of childfree women: the "infertility epidemic," the first stirrings of the "family values" movement and the gradual mobilization of the religious right and the feminist backlash. The strong showing of the Childfree Positives terms during this time frame, as indicated on the cluster map, indicates that the childfree lifestyle was viewed in a more positive way immediately after the years in which the feminist movement enjoyed the most power.

Pro-family and anti-childfree articles showed striking increases during the second time period. This is borne out by the research, which showed a statistically significant increase in the Childfree Negatives cluster terms during Time Period 2. It is also enlightening to note that Time Period 2 also saw an increase in terms related to the Religious Fundamentalist cluster, as pronatalism is a strong theme associated with this group. In fact, these cluster terms appeared three times as often during the second time period.

The dramatic increase in Childfree Negative cluster terms, as shown by Table 17, indicates that there has definitely been a surge in pro-parenthood and anti-childfree frames since

the 1990s. The fact that the data used in the research were taken from a nominally "objective" source such as AP adds credibility to the hypothesis that negative framing of childfree women by the media does exist.

Another striking finding of the research is the lack of negative framing regarding working women and the continued acceptance of women's entry into the workforce. This occurrence is most likely the result of the country's reliance on the increased consumer spending and higher family incomes created by working women, which is generally viewed as a positive change.

Although the Adaptation to Change frame provided interesting topically-related themes in its articles, the cluster was the most weakly defined of the five and in actuality did not affect the outcome of the central research question.

### Conclusions

The answer to the question "How do the media frame voluntarily childless women—in positive or negative ways?" as shown by the research, is "in negative ways," particularly during the last decade. The reasons behind this negative framing are less clear.

The review of the literature, as well as the research, indicates a distinct time pattern in media framing of voluntarily childless women. The increase political power obtained by religious fundamentalists, which took place primarily during the Reagan years and continued to influence American politics during the 1990s, distinctly placed emphasis on the "family" and traditional roles for women. Obviously, pronatalism is an important component of conservative religious doctrine. As the journalistic frames about the feminist movement grew increasingly negative, so too did the media's framing of voluntarily childless women, or "women outside the norm." The significant increase in articles using terms associated with both religious fundamentalism and negative terms in relation to the childfree lifestyle should not be surprising.



The negative framing of voluntarily childless women, although not new, was motivated by several major social changes that took place during the 1980s and early 1990s.

The first factor, the maturation of the baby-boom generation, led to an increased focus on family and child-related issues. As the majority of this previously rebellious generation married, purchased homes and began raising families, their view of the world changed. As a generation, boomers have always demanded national attention for their particular social issues, and so infertility, child-bearing and parenting became the focus of the media spotlight. Although the majority of the current generation of voluntarily childless women are members of the boomer generation, their resistance to joining the procreation movement has put them at odds with popular culture.

Additionally, as the review of the literature stated, individuals have a marked tendency to become more conservative in regard to political and social issues after they become parents. This was the case with the boomers; although the 1992 election of Bill Clinton would presumably show that a Democratic "liberal" candidate could get elected, Clinton primarily won office as a moderate with strong leanings towards themes of support for families and more conservative economic policies. The subsequent election of strong conservative George W. Bush and his continuing popularity during the early years of his presidency provide persuasive evidence that the boomers are becoming more conservative as they age.

Consumerism has also played an important role in the marginalization of voluntarily childless women. Childfree women, for the most part, do not participate in the purchases of highly visible consumer items such as toys, baby items and maternity clothes, and they are not raising future consumers. Therefore, it is much more profitable (and simpler) for advertisers to concentrate on the mythical "stay-at-home-mom" as the ideal consumers and to market their products accordingly. Advertisements today tout slogans such as "Mama's got the magic of

Clorox 2" and "You need a Mom's Motrin," as though the entire population of American women neatly fit within a stereotype straight out of the 1950s.

Finally, the aging of the boomers has also influenced another important cultural trend: the nostalgic longing for the "ideal" families of the 1950s. Compared to today's world, where incidents such as the Oklahoma City bombing, the Columbine shootings and the September 11 terrorist attacks dominate the news, the decade in which the majority of boomers grew up appears safe and non-threatening. As the 1950s was one of the most pronatalist decades in America's history, it stands to reason that boomers searching for resolution to troubling social issues look to home and hearth for solace. This has created a desire for stability and comfort—a desire, cultural norms dictate, which can only be fulfilled by the traditional nuclear family. The country's current soaring rates of child abuse, abandonment and neglect, however, offer a different picture and illustrate the dangers of unrestrained pronatalism.

### Recommendations for Further Research

This study was limited to AP wire reports, primarily due to AP's reputation for scrupulous objectivity. A livelier, and perhaps more culturally relevant study might be obtained through analysis of the content of popular women's magazines such as *Glamour*, *Redbook* and *McCall's*. A broader study of media framing of childfree women might also be obtained through the analysis of nationally distributed newspapers, such as *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*, or *USA Today*. Television news reporting would also offer an interesting venue.

A content analysis of the framing of voluntarily childless women through the media of entertainment television and film also might offer an interesting area for potential research. Susan Faludi, in *Backlash*, discusses the images of childless women in films such as *Fatal Attraction* and on television shows such as *Murphy Brown*.

The burgeoning impact of the "Childfree Movement" also offers potential for further scrutiny. The increasing number of web sites dedicated to the childfree vary from the civilized (Childless by Choice, <http://now2000.com/cbc>) to the audacious (the infamous Brats site at <http://www.fred.net/turtle/kids/kidrants.html>). The popular No Kidding! Social group also has expanded and now has chapters in four countries. The U.S. No Kidding! group also sponsors an annual convention; the Web site for No Kidding! is located at <http://www.nokidding.net>.

The United States is not the only country experiencing an increase in voluntarily childlessness. In European countries such as Germany, one in three women ages 15 to 44 are childless; in Italy, current population replacement rates are 1.2 children per woman. Japan is also experiencing a severe "birth dearth." Studying the factors influencing increasing childlessness in these other countries might offer insight into the phenomenon in America.

Finally, a comparison study between women who choose to become mothers and childfree women would provide interesting insights into the factors behind women's reproductive decisions and the influences these choices have over their lives.

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## **APPENDICES**

## APPENDIX A

### *Lexis/Nexis AP Newswire Articles*

1. May 5, 1977, Monday - PM Cycle, International News Section. 569 words. UN: PEOPLE LIVING LONGER BUT NOT ALWAYS HEALTHIER LIVES. By CLARE NULLIS, Associated Press Writer, GENEVA.
2. July 10, 1977, Sunday - BC Cycle, 1189 words. CZECH GOVERNMENT PAYS WOMEN TO STAY HOME WITH CHILDREN. By ALEXANDER G. HIGGINS, Associated Press Writer, PRAGUE, CZECHOSLOVAKIA.
3. July 29, 1978, 1195 words - An AP News Special. ARRIVAL OF TEST TUBE BABY. By GRAHAM HEATHCOTE, Associated Press Writer, LONDON.
4. August 10, 1978 - AM Cycle, 435 words. NUMBER OF U.S. ILLEGITIMATE BIRTHS DOUBLE. By ANN BLACKMAN, Associated Press Writer, WASHINGTON.
5. October 17, 1978 - PM Cycle, 686 words. HIGHER SOCIAL SECURITY WITHOLDING MAY BE BIGGEST TAX INCREASE. By JIM LUTHER, Associated Press Writer, WASHINGTON.



6.        October 19, 1978 - PM Cycle, 481 words. WOMEN BORN 1905 - 1909 HAD FEWER CHILDREN, LACK CARE. By CHRIS CONNELL, Associated Press Writer, WASHINGTON.
  
7.        April 17, 1979, Tuesday - AM Cycle, Domestic News Section, 318 words. WOMEN SPEND LESS TIME ON CHORES AND CHILD CARE. Compiled from AP News reports, CLEVELAND.
  
8.        April 26, 1979, Thursday - PM Cycle, Domestic News Section, 539 words. SOCIOLOGIST MEASURES TIME SPENT DURING NORMAL DAY. Compiled from AP wire reports, NEW YORK.
  
9.        May 6, 1979, Sunday - AM Cycle, Domestic News Section, 434 words. WOMEN WHO REJECT MOTHERHOOD ARE GENERALLY HAPPY AND WELL-ADJUSTED. By ARNOLD ZEITLIN, Associated Press Writer, BOSTON.
  
10.       May 23, 1979, Wednesday - AM Cycle, Washington Dateline Section, 712 words. CARTER SENDS WELFARE REVISION PROPOSAL TO CONGRESS. By BROOKS JACKSON, Associated Press Writer. WASHINGTON.
  
11.       September 26, 1979, Wednesday - AM Cycle, Domestic News Section, 317 words. STATE COURT UPHOLDS APARTMENT HOUSE EVICTION OF FAMILY. Compiled from AP wire reports, LOS ANGELES.

12. November 7, 1979, Wednesday - AM Cycle, Washington Dateline Section, 377 words. AMERICAN WOMEN WAITING LONGER TO HAVE CHILDREN. By RANDOLPH SCHMID, Associated Press Writer, WASHINGTON.
13. January 26, 1980, Saturday - PM Cycle, Domestic News Section, 259 words. MOST RESIDENTS IGNORE ASBESTOS THREAT. Compiled from AP wire reports, GLOBE, ARIZ.
14. January 31, 1980, Thursday - PM Cycle, Domestic News Section, 260 words. CITY COUNCIL OUTLAWS ADULT-ONLY RENTAL HOUSING. Compiled from AP wire reports, LOS ANGELES.
15. May 6, 1980, Tuesday - PM Cycle, Domestic News Section, 806 words. A VISIT WITH TILLIE OLSEN. By RICHARD HERZFELDER, Associated Press Writer, NEW YORK.
16. May 23, 1980, Friday - PM Cycle, Domestic News Section, 471 words. NUCLEAR FAMILIES FADING, REPORT SAYS. Compiled from AP wire reports, CAMBRIDGE, MA.
17. July 11, 1980, Friday - PM Cycle, Washington Dateline Section, 584 words. NO-CHILDREN RULE IN RENTAL HOUSING GROWS, HUD SAYS. By GLENN RITT, Associated Press Writer, WASHINGTON.

18. July 31, 1980, Thursday - PM Cycle, Domestic News Section, 260 words. CITY COUNCIL OUTLAWS ADULT-ONLY RENTAL HOUSING. Compiled from AP wire reports. LOS ANGELES.
19. September 3, 1980, Wednesday - PM Cycle, Domestic News Section, 604 words. FAMILIES AND INDIVIDUALS RETURN TO CITIES. By JOHN CUNIFF, AP Business Analyst, NEW YORK.
20. October 10, 1980, Friday - PM Cycle, Domestic News Section, 590 words. BUSINESS MIRROR: THE FAMILY HOUSING STRUGGLE. By JOHN CUNIFF, Associated Press Business Analyst, NEW YORK.
21. December 4, 1980, Thursday - PM Cycle, Domestic News Section, 476 words. SURROGATE MOTHER RECALLS EMOTIONAL PARTING. Compiled from AP wire reports, NEW YORK.
22. February 9, 1981, Monday - PM Cycle, Domestic News Section, 273 words. FAMILY SIZE CAN BE DRAWBACK TO RENTERS. Compiled from AP wire reports, NEW YORK.
23. June 22, 1981, Monday - PM Cycle, Business News Section, 883 words. PART I: THE HOUSING NIGHTMARE. By LOUISE COOK, Associated Press Writer, NEW YORK.
24. July 31, 1981, Friday - AM Cycle, Washington Dateline Section, 344 words. NON-PARENTS DAY: A CELEBRATION FOR THE CHILDLESS. By HARRY F. ROSENTHANL, Associated Press Writer, WASHINGTON.

25. February 13, 1982, Saturday - AM Cycle, International News Section, 778 words.  
PONTIFF PREACHES COMPASSION ON OLD BATTLEFIELD. By HUGH MULLIGAN.  
AP Special Correspondent, ONITSHA, NIGERIA.
26. February 13, 1982, Saturday - AM Cycle, Domestic News Section, 475 words. STUDY  
SUGGEST WAYS FOR COUPLES TO STAY TOGETHER. By F. ALAN BOYCE, Associated  
Press Writer, RALEIGH, N.C.
27. January 23, 1983, Sunday - AM Cycle, Domestic News Section, 563 words. NEW  
HOUSES SHRINK, BUT LUXURY EXPANDS. By PAUL RECER, Associated Press Writer,  
HOUSTON.
28. April 2, 1983, Saturday - Domestic News section, 818 words. SOUTHERN  
CALIFORNIA BEACH CITIES BECOMING WEALTHY ENCLAVES. By STEPHEN FOX,  
Associated Press Writer, LOS ANGELES.
29. May 5, 1983, Thursday - AM Cycle, Washington Dateline Section, 456 words.  
WOMEN PLANNING ON FEWER CHILDREN. By RANDOLPH SCHMID, Associated Press  
Writer, WASHINGTON.
30. October 24, 1983, Monday - AM Cycle, Washington Dateline section, 571 words.  
FAMILIES REMAIN VITAL DESPITE DIVORCE, FALLING BIRTH RATES. By  
RANDOLPH E. SCHMID, Associated Press Writer, WASHINGTON.

31. February 15, 1985, Friday - AM Cycle, Domestic News Section, 259 words. STUDY SAYS NO EVIDENCE AMERICANS ARE EMBRACING CHILDLESSNESS. Compiled from AP wire reports, ANN ARBOR, MICH.
32. February 20, 1985, Wednesday - PM Cycle, Washington Dateline Section, 774 words. STUDY FINDS WORKING WOMEN HEALTHIER THAN UNEMPLOYED. By RANDOLPH E. SCHMID, Associated Press Writer, WASHINGTON.
33. May 15, 1985, Wednesday - BC Cycle, Domestic News Section, 299 words. AMERICAN WOMEN POSTPONING CHILDREN. Compiled from AP wire reports, ANN ARBOR, MICH.
34. May 27, 1985, Monday - AM Cycle, Domestic News Section, 597 words. FRUSTACIS DRIVEN BY MORMON BELIEFS, INABILITY TO CONCEIVE. Compiled from AP wire reports, RIVERSIDE, CALIF.
35. September 25, 1985, Wednesday - AM Cycle, Domestic News Section, 658 words. STUDY SAYS AMERICAN FAMILY ALIVE, WELL AND THRIVING. Compiled from AP wire reports, NEW YORK.

36. August 18, 1986, Monday - AM Cycle, Domestic News Section, 457 words. WOMEN WHO DELAY CHILDREN EARN MORE, BUT CHILDBEARING BACK IN VOGUE. By DIANE PACETTI, Associated Press Writer, CHICAGO.
37. November 20, 1986, Thursday - PM Cycle, Domestic News Section, 343 words. FATAL HEART ATTACKS MORE COMMON AMONG CHILDLESS WOMEN. By PAUL RAEBURN, AP Science editor, DALLAS.
38. December 15, 1986, Monday - AM Cycle, Washington Dateline Section, 560 words. BOOMERS AND FAMILIES. By RANDOLPH SCHMID, Associated Press Writer, WASHINGTON.
39. December 16, 1986, Tuesday - PM Cycle, Washington Dateline Section, 615 words. TRADITIONAL FAMILY MAKES A COMEBACK. By RANDOLPH SCHMID, Associated Press Writer, WASHINGTON.
40. September 26, 1987, Saturday - AM Cycle, Domestic News Section, 140 words. PEOPLE IN THE NEWS. Compiled from AP wire reports, NEW YORK.
41. May 13, 1988, Friday - AM Cycle, Domestic News Section, 598 words. MOST SUCCESSFUL JEWISH WOMEN MARRIED WITH CHILDREN. Compiled from AP wire reports, WASHINGTON.

42. June 16, 1988, Thursday - PM Cycle, Washington Dateline section, 708 words.  
STUDY: MOST NEW MOTHERS PART OF LABOR FORCE. By RANDOLPH SCHMID,  
Associated Press Writer, WASHINGTON.
43. November 30, 1988, Wednesday - AM Cycle, Washington Dateline section, 522 words.  
MEN DO MORE HOUSEWORK BUT STILL TRAIL WOMEN. By RANDOLPH E.  
SCHMID, Associated Press Writer, WASHINGTON.
44. March 31, 1989, Friday - PM Cycle, Domestic News Section, 341 words. SURVEY:  
HALF OF WOMEN WILLING TO HAVE CHILDREN WITHOUT MARRYING. Compiled  
from AP Survey, LOS ANGELES.
45. June 22, 1989, Thursday - PM Cycle, Washington Dateline section, 705 words.  
PREMARITAL BIRTHS ARE UP: MORE OLDER MOTHERS. By RANDOLPH E.  
SCHMID, Associated Press Writer, WASHINGTON.
46. August 9, 1989, Wednesday - PM Cycle, Washington Dateline section, 510 words.  
LIES, DAMNED LIES AND T-SHIRTS. By MIKE FEINSILBER, Associated Press writer,  
WASHINGTON.
47. August 11, 1989, Thursday - PM Cycle, Business News Section, 722 words.  
CONSUMERS IN THE DRIVER'S SEAT. By JOHN CUNIFF, AP Business Analyst, NEW  
YORK.

48. March 15, 1990, Thursday - BC Cycle, Business News Section, 1091 words.  
"MOMMY TRACK" STIGMA STILL DOGS FELICE SCHWARTZ. By RICK GLADSTONE.  
Associated Press Business Writer, NEW YORK.
49. May 12, 1990, Saturday - AM Cycle, Domestic News Section, 355 words. CHURCH  
TO HOLD NON-MOTHERS DAY SERVICE FOR CHILDLESS WOMEN. By FRANCIS  
HOPKINS, Associated Press Writer, BOSTON.
50. September 16, 1990, Sunday - BC Cycle, Domestic News Section, 2174 words.  
OLDER MOTHERS SHOW OPTIMISM. By Nancy Shulins, AP Special Correspondent, NEW  
YORK.
51. October 27, 1990, Saturday - AM Cycle, Domestic News Section, 777 words. NEW  
MEDICAL TECHNOLOGY ALLOWS WOMEN TO TURN BACK BIOLOGICAL CLOCK.  
By LESLIE DREYFOUS, AP National Writer.
52. December 6, 1990, Thursday - PM Cycle, Washington Dateline Section, 725 words.  
STUDY DISPUTES NOTION THAT INFERTILITY IS ON THE INCREASE. By Jill  
Lawrence, Associated Press Writer, WASHINGTON.
53. March 16, 1991, Saturday - AM Cycle, Domestic News Section, 445 words. HOW AP  
POLL ON CHILDLESS COUPLES WAS CONDUCTED. Compiled from AP News poll, NEW  
YORK.



54. March 16, 1991, Saturday - AM Cycle, Domestic News Section, 1244 words. THE CHANGING FAMILY: CHILDLESS COUPLES CONFRONT SOCIETY'S NORMS. By LESLIE DREYFOUS, AP National Writer.
55. March 22, 1992, Sunday - BC Cycle, Domestic News Section, 1977 words. BABY BOOMER WOMEN TWICE AS LIKELY NOT TO HAVE CHILDREN. By NANCY SHULINS, AP Special Correspondent.
56. March 26, 1992, Thursday - AM Cycle, Washington Dateline Section, 459 words. REPORT; WORLD'S WOMEN DENIED RIGHT NOT TO HAVE CHILDREN. By DAVID BRISCOE, Associated Press Writer, WASHINGTON.
57. April 6, 1992, Monday - PM Cycle, 510 words. STUDY SUGGESTS MARRIAGE, KIDS BUFFER WOMEN FROM JOB STRESSES. By MALCOM RITTER, AP Science Writer, NEW YORK.
58. July 9, 1992, Thursday - PM Cycle - Political News Section , 743 words. CANDIDATES TRY TO OPEN ISSUE GAPS IN THEIR FAVOR. By WALTER MEARS, Special AP Correspondent, NEW YORK.
59. July 27, 1992, Monday - BC Cycle, Sports News Section, 645 words. DINKS KEY TO INNOVATION IN SPORTS. By IRA DREYFUSS, Associated Press Writer, WASHINGTON.

60. August 24, 1992, Monday - AM Cycle, Washington Dateline Section, 703 words.  
AMERICA WON'T RETURN TO OZZIE AND HARRIET. By DEBORAH MESCE,  
Associated Press Writer, WASHINGTON.
61. August 25, 1992, Tuesday - PM Cycle, Washington Dateline section, 612 words. 1950s  
STYLE FAMILIES NO LONGER TYPICAL, STUDY SAYS. By DEBORAH MIESCE,  
Associated Press Writer, WASHINGTON.
62. September 25, 1992, Friday - BC Cycle, Section undefined, 620 words. COUPLES  
HEED BIBLICAL COMMAND TO BE FRUITFUL. By DAVID BRIGGS, Associated Press  
Writer.
63. October 6, 1992, Monday - AM Cycle, Financial Pages Section, 496 words. IS  
CHILDLESS EMPLOYEE AN ORPHAN? By JOHN CUNIFF, AP Business Analyst, NEW  
YORK.
64. November 21, 1992, Saturday - AM Cycle, Washington Dateline Section, 599 words.  
STUDY SAYS HAPPIEST CAREER WOMEN ARE THOSE WITH HUSBANDS,  
CHILDREN. By PAUL RECER, AP Science Writer, WASHINGTON.
65. December 13, 1992, Sunday - AM Cycle, Domestic News Section, 382 words.  
"CHILDFREE" WOMAN CREATES SUPPORT GROUP FOR ADULTS WITHOUT  
CHILDREN. By KATHLEEN GRUBB, Associated Press Writer, ROSEVILLE, CALIF.

66. May 26, 1993, Wednesday - AM Cycle, Domestic News Section, 293 words. STUDY: WOMEN WITH MANY CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK OF HEART DISEASE. Compiled from AP wire reports, BOSTON.
67. June 15, 1993, Tuesday - BC Cycle, Domestic News Section, 1542 words. FELICE SCHWARTZ SPEAKS OUT. By LISA GENASCI, Associated Press Business Writer, NEW YORK.
68. July 13, 1993, Tuesday - AM Cycle, Washington Dateline section, 618 words. MORE AND MORE CHILDREN BORN OUT OF WEDLOCK. By JAMES ROWLEY, Associated Press Writer, WASHINGTON.
69. January 13, 1994, Thursday - PM Cycle, Domestic News Section, 470 words. STUDY: BREAST-FEEDING REDUCES RISK OF BREAST CANCER. By DANIEL Q. HANEY, AP Science Writer, BOSTON.
70. July 6, 1994, Wednesday - AM Cycle, Domestic News Section, 472 words. CHILDBIRTH RAISES, THEN LOWERS, RISK OF BREAST CANCER. By DANIEL Q. HANEY, AP Science Writer, BOSTON.
71. July 7, 1994, Thursday - PM Cycle, Domestic News Section, 477 words. SOME BENIGN BREAST GROWTHS LINKED TO RISK OF BREAST CANCER. By DANIEL Q. HANEY, AP Science Writer, BOSTON.

72. August 8, 1994, Friday - BC Cycle, Entertainment News Section, 862 words. FROM STRIPPER TO SCHOOLTEACHER. AUTHOR SAMPLES AMERICAN WORKPLACE. By JUDIE GLAVE, Associated Press Writer, NEW YORK.
73. February 12, 1995, Sunday - BC Cycle, Sports News, 685 words. GOLD MAKES DRIVE FOR WOMEN. By IRA DREYFUSS, Associated Press Writer, WASHINGTON.
74. June 30, 1995, Sunday - BC Cycle, Business News section, 650 words. YOUNG PROFESSIONALS SAY REAGAN TAX PLAN FAVORS TRADITIONAL FAMILIES. By SUZANNE WETLAUFER, Associated Press Writer, BOSTON.
75. August 31, 1995, Thursday - AM Cycle, Domestic News Section, 331 words. GENE MAY GIVE BREAST CANCER PROTECTION TO YOUNG MOTHERS, STUDY SUGGESTS. By MALCOLM RITTER, AP Science Writer, NEW YORK.
76. March 8, 1996, Friday - BC Cycle, Undefined section, 600 words. SOME WOMEN ENJOY A HECTIC LIFESTYLE. By REDBOOK, AP Special Features.
77. September 10, 1996, Tuesday - AM Cycle, Domestic News Section, 534 words. EXPERT: BIOLOGICAL PARENTS BEST OPTION FOR REARING CHILDREN. By BRUCE DUNFORD, Associated Press Writer, HONOLULU.

78. May 23, 1996, Thursday - AM Cycle, Undefined Section, 581 words. COMMENTS ON BOB DOLE'S CHILDLESS MARRIAGE. Compiled from AP wire reports. SPRINGFIELD, ILL.
79. November 26, 1996, Tuesday - PM Cycle, International News Section, 454 words. AMERICAN HOUSEHOLDS AND FAMILY MAKEUP STABILIZES. By RANDOLPH E. SCHMID, Associated Press Writer, WASHINGTON.
80. November 5, 1997, Wednesday - AM Cycle, Washington Dateline Section, 679 words. AMERICANS SUPPORT ADOPTION, UNSURE ABOUT ADOPTIVE FAMILIES' TIES. By LAURA MECKLER, Associated Press Writer, WASHINGTON.
81. December 24, 1998, Thursday - PM Cycle, Domestic News Section, 580 words. STUDY: LATE BIRTHS HELP LONGEVITY. By RICK CALLAN, Associated Press Writer, LONDON.
82. March 5, 1999, Friday - BC Cycle, State and Regional News Section, 1298 words. UTAH STATE LEGISLATURE AWARDS TAX BREAK TO STAY-AT-HOME MOMS. Compiled from Associated Press reports, THE SALT LAKE TRIBUNE, SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH.
83. March 8, 1999, Monday - PM Cycle, State and Regional News section, 485 words. WEST HARTFORD MAYOR ACKNOWLEDGES TOWN'S POOL POLICY IS DISCRIMINATORY. Compiled from AP wire reports, WEST HARTFORD, CONN.

84. May 24, 1999, Monday - BC Cycle, National Political Section, 629 words. HILL SAY HIS LIFESTYLE MAKES HIM BETTER LAWMAKER THAN KEENAN. By BOB ANEZ, Associated Press Writer, HELENA, MONT.
85. May 25, 1999, Thursday - PM Cycle, International News Section, 337 words. ONLY FIVE IN U.S. EIGHT PREGNANCIES LEAD TO BIRTH. By CHRISTOPHER CONNELL, Associated Press Writer, WASHINGTON.
86. July 10, 1999, Saturday - BC Cycle, State and Regional Section, 943 words. INDIANA WOMAN MAKES IT TO THE BIG TIME. By BOB KOSTANCZUK, WASHINGTON.
87. October 25, 1999, Monday - AM Cycle, National Political Section, 452 words. STUDY SAYS REPORTING MORE PERSONALITY-DRIVEN ON FEMALE CANDIDATES. By DEB RIECHMANN, Associated Press Writer, WASHINGTON.
88. March 28, 2000, Tuesday - BC Cycle, State and Regional News, 1587 words. REACTION TO VERMONT'S CIVIL UNION BILL. Compiled from AP wire reports, VERMONT.
89. September 13, 2000, Wednesday - BC Cycle, 1054 words. LONE STAR LIVING: LESSONS FROM A SONGSTRESS IN WAITING. By MICHAEL CORCORAN, Austin-American Statesman, AUSTIN, TEXAS.

90. October 23, 2000, Monday - BC Cycle, Washington Dateline Section, 227 words.

CENSUS BUREAU REPORT ON FERTILITY OF AMERICAN WOMEN. Compiled from AP wire reports. WASHINGTON.

91. December 9, 2000, Saturday - BC Cycle, 1586 words. State and Regional News

Section, CANCER-STRICKEN WOMAN NOW MOTHER TO TWO CHILDREN. By

BARBARA WALTERS, Kalamazoo Gazette, KALAMAZOO, MICHIGAN.

## VITA

Kimberly Anne Mayo Cowart was born on December 28, 1955, in the small West Tennessee town of Dyersburg, and was raised in nearby Milan, Tennessee. She is the only child of Carolyn Miller Mayo Phelan and the late Kenneth Ramer Mayo and is the stepdaughter of Tommy Phelan. Cowart attended the public elementary school in Milan and graduated from Milan High School in 1973.

Cowart attended Murray State University from 1973 through 1976, and attended Memphis State University (now the University of Memphis) from 1976 through the spring of 1978. She returned to Murray State in the fall of 1978 and in December of that year received a Bachelor of Science in Communications with a broadcasting major and a journalism minor.

Cowart began her communications career at radio stations in Jackson, Tennessee, in 1979 and shortly afterwards moved to Knoxville, Tennessee, to accept a position with WIMZ-FM as an announcer. In 1980, Cowart became the first female to host an afternoon drive shift in the Knoxville commercial radio market. She subsequently moved into copywriting and production at WIMZ.

Cowart's career in marketing, advertising and public relations spans over 18 years and includes stints at both commercial advertising agencies and nonprofit organizations. In 1989, she became the Marketing Director for the Knoxville Opera Company, overseeing advertising and public relations campaigns for this successful regional arts organization. In 1990, Cowart directed a seven-state regional marketing, advertising and public relations campaign promoting the Knoxville Opera-sponsored appearance of legendary tenor Luciano Pavarotti.



During her career, Cowart has been the recipient of 13 Addy Awards from the Greater Knoxville Advertising Club; she also received a Region 7, Deep South District Regional Addy Award. Cowart has also won four national awards for healthcare marketing from *Healthcare Marketing Report*, a trade magazine for healthcare advertising and public relations professionals.

Cowart joined the staff of the University of Tennessee College of Engineering as Communications Specialist in 1998. Since then, she has successfully directed an interactive CD-ROM promoting the college's Engage Freshman Engineering Fundamentals program, which won "Best of Show" for its presentation day at the American Society of Engineering Education's 2001 Conference in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Cowart also directed a creative team, led by independent Abacus Arts producers Rip Noel and Joe Jaynes, which produced a successful multi-media recruiting CD for the college.

Cowart served on the public relations committee for Knoxville's inaugural "Race for the Cure," an event dedicated to raising funds for the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation, and has also been a member of the Greater Knoxville Advertising Club and the University of Tennessee Faculty Women's Club.

Cowart currently resides in Knoxville with her husband of 15 years, Glen Cowart.

